comics
· INTERNATIONAL ·

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CIRCULATION: 11,000

New Superman title from DC

THE WORLD's first and still best-known superhero gains a new monthly title, Superman The Man of Steel, **from DC Comics launching May 14.**

This $1.00 new title will be in addition to the character's three existing monthlies, **Action Comics, Adventures of Superman** and **Superman.**

DC editorial head Dick Giordano has long had the desire to produce weekly US titles. But with the failure of **Action Comics Weekly,** it is now felt that four Superman monthlies, each released one week apart, will effectively create one weekly but with each retaining a month's shelf-life.

Byrne revives Omac as new DC mini . . 4

Under group editor Mike Carlin, the new title will be written by ex-Marvel creator Louise Simonson, with art by John Bogdanove inked by Dennis Janke.

The first issue will commence a 4-part serial across all May Superman titles, each being a special $1.75 48 page size, before going to standard 32 page $1.00 comics.

Following the serial, the current inter-title overlapping stories will be abandoned in favour of the more acceptable single title continuity.

While Louise Simonson is now scheduled to work on the Superman character, her husband, Walt, has yet to complete his own contribution.

Though Walt Simonson has resigned from Marvel's **Fantastic Four** (effective issue 354, shipping late May), he has still only partially completed 15 pages of the announced **1990 Superman Annual,** now retitled **Superman Special 1991.**

With Marvel editor-in-chief Tom de Falco taking over **Fantastic Four** scripts from issue 355, Walt will now only be contributing the one Superman story before pursuing more personal projects such as his **Starslammers** graphic novel.

Toxic Weekly takes off

FOLLOWING one new and one reprint **Marshal Law Special,** the newlyformed Apocalypse Comics launches its major title later this month.

Toxic!, featuring the key talents behind the success of **2000AD** is probably the bravest independent comics venture to date, from either side of the Atlantic.

While others have launched monthlies for the new comics audience, **Toxic!** will be weekly, with all the additional work and speculation involved.

Backed fully by the directors of Neptune Distributors, Geoff and Sarah Fry, **Toxic!** is edited by exMarvel UK senior editor Dan Abnett and has contributions from Alan Grant, John Wagner, Pat Mills, Simon Bisley, Cam Kennedy, Mike McMahon and Kevin O'Neill.

While the popularity of **Toxic's** lead features, Marshal Law and The Bogie Man, have gained a strong fan following, the title will print over 150,000 for newsstands.

Preview of ***Toxic!*** *artwork* . . 24

Where all major publishers have failed by top shelf 'adult comics' racking, **Toxic!** will be pitched at the middle ground audience and racked with other weeklies.

With the title winning contributors by paying a higher rate than any other publisher for UK, US and graphic novel rights, this ambitious launch deserves to succeed to encourage industry growth.

COMICS INTERNATIONAL

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No. 12	***June 1991***	*11/5*	*18/5*

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nEWS america

Infinity Gauntlet

SINCE FALLING out of grace with DC Comics over his comments on the pre-arranged 'Death of Robin' series, writer Jim Starlin has been giving the majority of his time to Marvel.

As well as his **Punisher** mini-series (see elsewhere this issue), Starlin is the prime force behind **The Infinity Gauntlet.**

Marvel's mega-crossover six-issue series is billed by the publishers as their biggest crossover project since **Secret Wars**, and, they say, promises to be even more successful.

While the backlash which followed **Secret Wars** hardly makes it a favourable reference, Starlin promises a tale best utilising his favourite theme, cosmic struggle.

The plot tells of the mad god Thanos being charged by his lover, Death, to destroy one half of the universe. To achieve this, Thanos will unleash the powers of his Infinity Gauntlet which holds the Infinity Gems and give him complete control of Mind, Soul, Time, Space, Power and Reality.

It is against this seemingly unbeatable force that the Marvel heroes must battle.

While the story spins directly out of events in Starlin's **Silver Surfer** monthly and his **Thanos Quest** limited series, the first taste of the crossovers to come appears in May's **Silver Surfer** (51), **Hulk** (383) and **Doctor Strange** (31).

The actual **Infinity Gauntlet** series begins shipping with its May 21st first issue and heralds the first artwork George Perez has produced for Marvel in almost ten years.

Perez, who has stated his desire to draw every super hero in America at least once, had steered clear of Marvel since the much-reported and publically argued fiasco over the proposed **Avengers & Justice League** co-production.

Fans with long memories will recall that Perez produced a large volume of art for the multi-character two-company team-up title before disagreements between (then editorial head) Jim Shooter and DC's Dick Giordano led to the cancellation of the entire series.

As well as marking a welcome return by Perez to Marvel, **Infinity Gauntlet** will be the first time Starlin and Perez have collaborated on a project.

Priced $2.50, **The Infinity Gauntlet** will be supported by a wide range of posters, promotional badges and 'sell sheets' giving a story summary and complete crossover guide.

NO LONGER DO THE LAWS OF NATURE BIND HIM.
HIS WILL CAN BEND THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY.
HE IS ALL. AND ALL THERE IS IS NOW HIS TO COMMAND.
THANOS IS NOW MIGHTIER THAN DEATH HERSELF.
MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE.

Compiled by Dez Skinn

New readers: begin here

Comics International *is a monthly news and reviews paper devoted to the comics medium. As such, it provides details of upcoming UK and US comics and related items.*

Certain products mentioned are not available through normal newsagent shops, but only from the 'direct sale' comics specialist stores and mail order companies. Details of such are scattered throughout the magazine in advertisements, and a listing of the major comics shops is given in our Retail Index.

Shipping dates *mentioned for American titles are the dates publications leave their US or Canadian printers to be air-freighted to the UK for specialist shops. These dates, and titles, do not relate to newsagent on-sale dates.*

The Marvel and DC titles on general national distribution are detailed with their UK price in our Advance Listings section, and are on sale approximately two to three months after the air-freighted copies can be bought through specialist shops and mail order companies dealing with "advance imports".

American dollar prices *are listed for US publications, with most specialists charging around 60p to the dollar. UK newsstand prices do not necessarily reflect this rate of exchange on titles they carry.*

Starlin and Wrightson team up on new Punisher title

IN AN UNLIKELY combined effort, Jim Starlin and Berni Wrightson — previously teamed-up on DC's **The Weird** — are to produce a new Marvel mini-series, **Punisher P.O.V.**

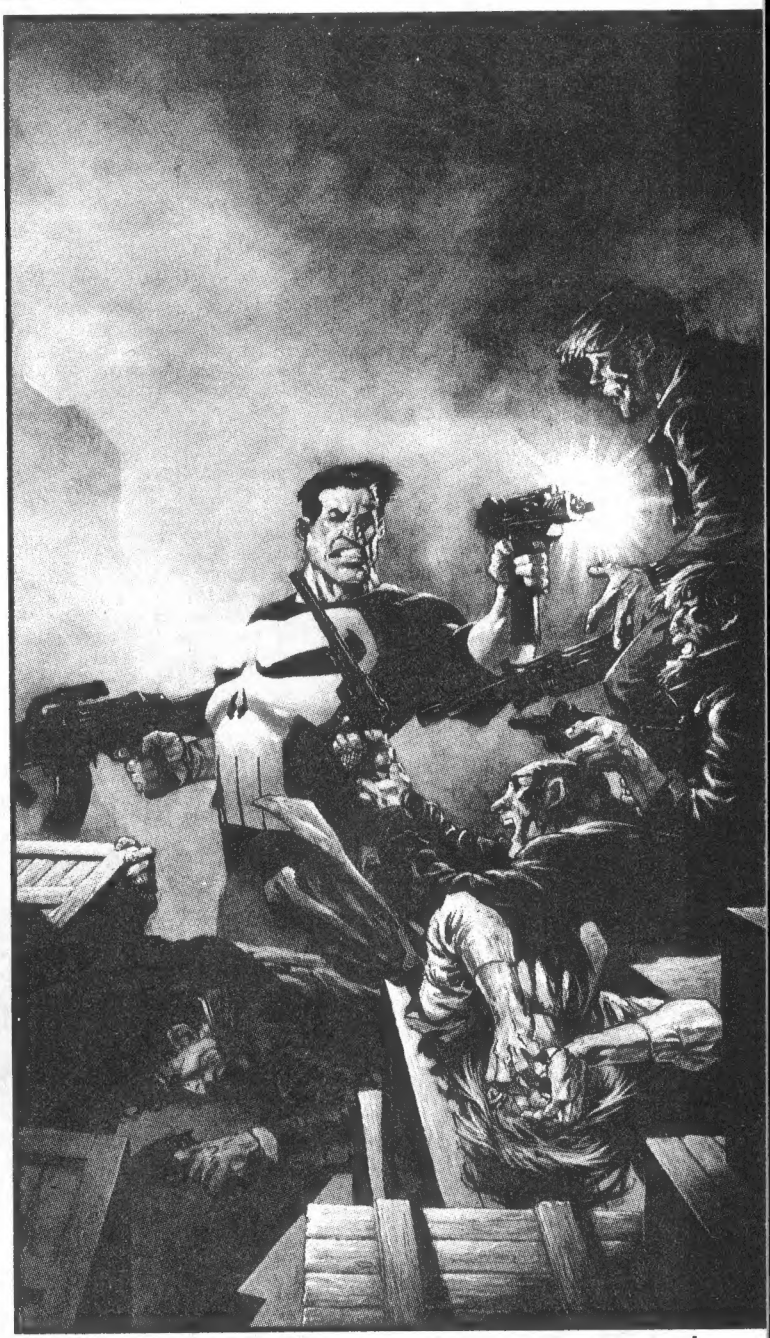
Starlin and Wrightson, who also made such a hit with **Batman:**

The Cult, have created a four-issue horror story for the Punisher, to be completed with painted colour by Bill Wray, who handled the same role on **The Cult.**

This $4.95 bookshelf format series tells of an ex-convict who blows himself up while wiring a bomb, and is mutated into a gruesome creature as a result.

When this creature goes on a killing spree, drinking his victims' blood for sustenance, both The Punisher and Nick Fury form an unfriendly alliance to track him down.

To further enhance the horror images that Wrightson became famous for through **Swamp Thing,** the final cast member is Chester Goudal, a psychotic who believes the world to be full of demons. After killing his mother, Goudal takes to the streets in search of the mutated blood-drinking creature.



Two new Aliens titles due from Dark Horse

STEVE Bissette and Dave Dorman are set to produce **Aliens: Tribe** for Dark Horse Comics.

Instead of being a comics story, it will be told in Dark Horse's new "graphic story album" format, with Bissette's text compemented by 24 fully painted illustrations and pen & ink spot illos plus page borders by Dave Dorman.

Publisher Mike Richardson commented, "**Aliens: Tribes** marks the debut of a new style of storytelling in an attractive squarebound hardcover format.".

He added that the story is about a crack team of specialised Alien exterminators being sent to clean out an infested ship.

"The 'Aliens' may be more than they bargained for, but this team can't quit until they've finished the job," said Richardson.

No release date has yet been set for the 64-page hardcover, but it is tentatively slated for late 1991.

JOINING Dark Horse Comics, following both staff and freelance work for DC Barbara Kesel is editing **Aliens 3.**

The comics adaptation of Fox's third **Aliens** movie is being handled by **Whisper** author Steven Grant and artist Denis Beauvais who produced stunning colour work on earlier **Aliens** series.

"Readers are really going to be surprised by what they see in this story," commented Grant. "I can't believe some of the things that are going to happen."

Beauvais added, "By working from the shooting script and a few storyboards, I can bring this movie to life in my own style, giving readers the chance to compare the two visions when the movie comes out."

John Byrne on DC's OMAC

DC HAS announced that John Byrne, who has revitalised many comics characters in recent years, is to revive Jack Kirby's **OMAC.**

Following his **Superman** and **Batman 3-D Special,** Canadian creator Byrne returns to DC for his latest project, a revival of the 1974 future hero, **OMAC** — the One Man Army Corps.

While continuing to write **Iron Man** and both write and draw **Namor** for Marvel, Byrne is producing **OMAC** as a 4-issue mini-series in DC's prestige format.

Mr. Big returns from the original series as the villain behind the time twisting, and OMAC, together with his all-knowing protector Brother Eye, break the time barrier in hot pursuit.

But fate takes an ominous turn when OMAC and Brother Eye are separated, and the hero materialises in the 1930s.

Unaided by his floating tutor, OMAC must survive the past to save the future.

Unlike many recent revivals, OMAC is promised to appeal to readers without prior knowledge of the character's history, but because of the violence, sexual situations and partial nudity, the title will carry a "suggested for mature readers" cover label.

OMAC 1 (of 4) will be shipping to the UK on May 7.

FACT FILE
OMAC

Kirby's original **OMAC** was part of his 'second wave' of DC creations, following the cancellation of his Fourth World trilogy (**Forever People, New Gods** and **Mr Miracle**). Following his successful 1972 **Kamandi** title, which ran to 59 issues **Omac** had only an 8 issue 1974-1975 run before cancellation.

The strip was revived as a back-up in **Kamandi** 59 (1978) but after only one issue the title fell victim to the DC implosion, when the company's promised expansion ('The DC Explosion') turned into a sweeping cancellation of many titles and projects.

A second revival was tried in 1980, with **Omac** as a back up strip in Mike Grell's **The Warlord,** but poor feedback resulted in it being replaced by Claw the Unconquered after only six issues (42-47).

Carrying a $4.95 cover price, John Byrne's new **OMAC** is set in the not-too-distant future when the global peace agency realizes something is terribly wrong with history, and suspects someone has tampered with the past.

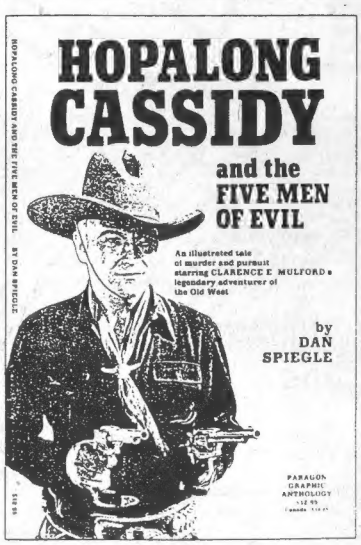
DUOTONE BOARD

A departure from the usual four colour approach, **OMAC** will be printed in black and white, with Byrne adding an extra dimension to the art through the use of the duotone board, popularised in comics by artist Ralph Reese, while working on **Web of Horror.**

The special art board allows the artist an easy yet precise way of embellishing his inked work with tints. Despite its superior results, duotone board is rarely used because of its expense. More popular is zippatone, a rub down dot tint, but because of the nature of transferring small dots, it is only effective when wanting to produce a rough, craggy texture.

Lettratone offers another popular tint alternative, and is often used on machine visuals. Rather than a rub-down trasfer, lettratone is cut out and placed over artwork. Because of its uniform dots, it can have a flattening, deadening effect if badly applied.

Duotone board has the tint built-in, but only becomes visible when an artist applies chemicals over the board. Brush strokes control the shape of the effect, with one chemical bringing up a linear tint, and the second a cross-hatching.

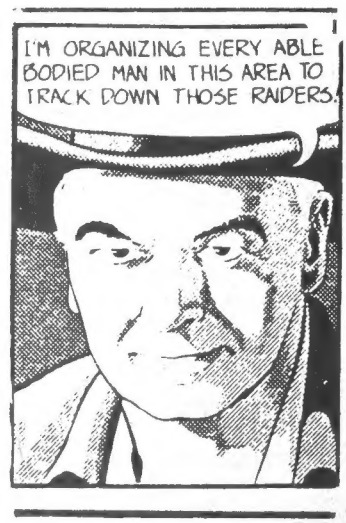

HOPALONG CASSIDY
and the FIVE MEN OF EVIL
An illustrated tale of murder and pursuit starring CLARENCE E. MULFORD's legendary adventurer of the Old West
by DAN SPIEGLE
PARAGON GRAPHIC ANTHOLOGY

New Hoppy compilation from AC

DAN SPIEGLE's classic **Hopalong Cassidy** newspaper strips have been collected into a graphic anthology by AC Comics.

The 68 page black and white volume features two complete King newspaper strips and marked the professional debut of artist Dan Spiegle.

Photos and articles on the Hopalong Cassidy film series round out the volume.



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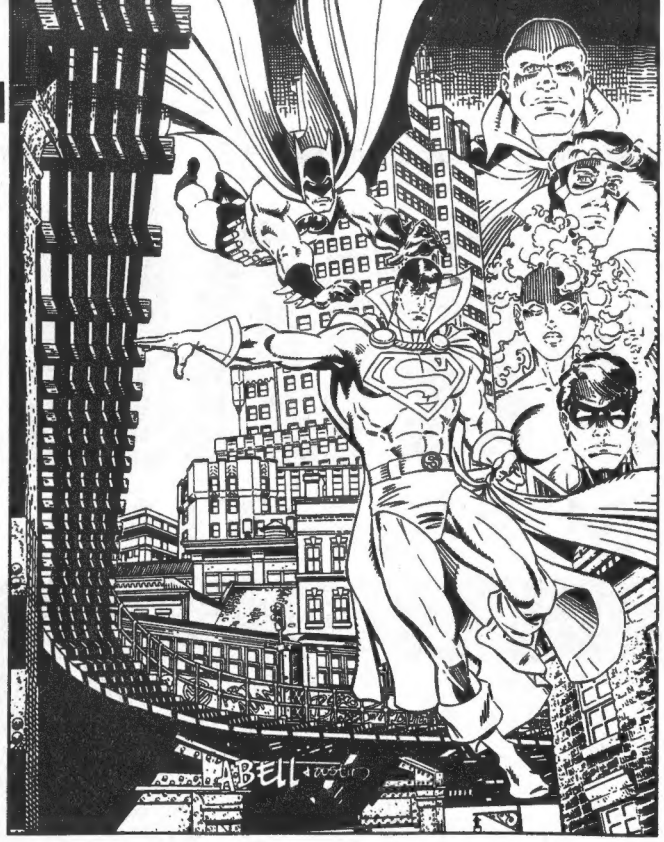


DC strike gold with new find

THE LATEST hot find to hit the comics scene is artist Dusty Abell whose first published work appears in **Superman Annual** 3.

As well as providing cover art (inked by Terry Austin), Abell contributes interior art on the 64 page annual from a Dan Jurgens script.

The story, which ties in with DC's **Armageddon 2001**, follows the plight of new super-hero Waverider in his search for the hero who will become the evil Monarch of the year 2030.

Waverider contacts Superman and looks into one of the Man of Steel's possible futures.

A '90s 'imaginary tale', the story tells how Batman is forced to use Luthor's kryptonite ring to subdue an out of control Superman, while Metropolis is nuked.

Of special interest to the fans of the 1960s Lois/Lana contest, the story features Superman married to Lana Lang.

Published in the standard newsprint format, **Superman Annual** 3 is priced $2.00 and ships on April 9.

US Weeklies

AMERICAN comics publishers have always been jealous of the advantages their British counterparts enjoy.

In 1971, DC Comics would have to print over 600,000 copies of a title to sell 250,000. When then-editorial director Carmine Infantino was told British comics were cancelled if their sale went below 250,000 **a week**, he was left speechless.

"A week? So how many copies do you print to sell 250,000 a week?" he asked. Given the reply, "We print 250,000, we sell 250,000," he refused to belief it, and quickly called in his production chief to hear the news.

Marvel caught on quickly to the huge difference between Britain's weekly firm sale market and America's monthly sale-or-return (SOR) equivalent, and launched a line of profitable UK weekly reprints.

But, while weekly firm sale comics have been the norm in Britain for over 100 years, America has always found this desirable goal to be prohibitive because of the distribution problems created by a country so vast. In much the same way that national daily newspapers are virtually unknown in America, weekly comicbooks have always been an unrealised dream.

But with the creation of the direct sales specialist market in the early 1980s, comics began to be taken more seriously. Shipments were air-freighted across the country and sold on a non-returnable basis.

Instead of the ponderous land shipping and high unsolds which had always held the industry back, speedy distribution of pre-sold copies meant frequency could be increased.

Coupled with the fact that research has proven the majority of copies of a popular publication sell in the first few days, this new expanding market allowed publishers to look at greater frequencies for their popular titles.

While fortnightly publication during the summer months has met with success for both DC and Marvel over the last few years, the only previous attempt at a weekly, DC's **Action Comics Weekly**, was poorly conceived and a total failure.

But, by giving popular characters such as **Spider-Man** and now **Superman** at least four different titles a month, and having them ship different weeks, the publishers can realise the equivalent of a weekly title, with the advantage of a monthly shelf-life.

IN BRIEF

A-PLUS Comics, currently reprinting a range of ACG and Charlton 1950s and 1960s strips is adding two 48 page $2.50 black and white titles to its lineup this month.

War includes material by Wally Wood, Sam Glanzman, Sid Check and Willi Franz, while **Adventures of Dr Graves** reprints Charlton Aparo and Sutton strips from **The Many Ghosts of Dr Graves.**

MOVIE SPIN-OFFS

TWO NEW movie tie-ins from Dark Horse are launched this month. Both full colour $2.50 32 page titles, and both 4-issue mini-series.

Predator: Big Game 1 continues the adventures of the alien hunters on Earth, and is by Arcudi & Dorkin.

Indiana Jones 1, by Messner-Loebs, Barry & Kesel tells a new story of the archeologist teacher turned adventurer.

ARMAGEDDON

THE FIRST issue of DC's major summer crossover title is on sale this week under the new title **DC Universe Special.**

This 64pg two-parter leads into all major DC annuals with its Waverider storyline around Armageddon 2001.

BRIT AT AC

NEW British find Andrew Hope is not only drawing for AC's **Fem Force**, but he is relocating from Glasgow to the US in the near future.

The fiftieth birthday of Ms Victory will mark the debut for his artwork, but AC is waiting for him to complete his move before scheduling the story.

MORE EISNER

POSSIBLY second only to comics with Clive Barker's name attached, Will Eisner has a new title reprinting his work on sale this month.

Baseball Comics 1 (Kitchen Sink, colour, $3.95) is taken from the 1949 Eisner Studio one-shot and features the work of Eisner, Feiffer, Blaisdell and Grandanetti.

A set of free baseball card inserts is included with the title.

MOON KNIGHT

MOON KNIGHT 26 provides a perfect start for those not normally following the series.

Harkening back to the 'glory days' of Moench & Sienkiewicz, it features the return of Stained Glass Scarlet in the first of a five issue storyline by DeMatteis, Garney & Palmer.

Marvel's **Moon Knight 26**, priced $1.50 should be in comic shops at the start of April.

SAMURAI CAT

MARVEL's Epic imprint is publishing a 3-issue mini series of **Samurai Cat**, beginning in April.

Straight from the **Samurai Cat** fantasy books created by Mark E. Rogers, Ralph Macchio will be handling scripts, while original **Alien Legion** artist Frank Cirocco provides art.

The series carries a $2.25 cover price.

FIFTIETH SURFER

THE SILVER Surfer reaches issue 50 with its April 23 shipping date, and celebrates with a double size $1.50 edition.

Author Jim Starlin finally reveals the secrets of Norrin Radd's childhood in a story he has been building up to for over a year.

Featuring a reanimated statue of Thanos as the issue's villain, the art is by usual penciller Ron Lim, inked by Tom Christopher.

Strips from Down Under

REPRINTING work from the Australian edition of **Penthouse**, Aircel Comics is releasing **Bodyguard** as a graphic album in April.

David de Vries of **Southern Squadron** provides script and inks, while co-**Puppet Master** adapter Glenn Lumsden handles the pencil art.

Bodyguards to the stars, female ex-cop Fox and her male boxing partner Wright, featured in the Austrlian **Penthouse** the Australian **Penthouse** from September 1989. With the title's 500,000 readership, **Bodyguards** became Australia's most widely read comic story.

David de Vries said of the strip, "As you would expect from material appearing in

ADULT ONLY
FROM THE PAGES OF AUSTRALIAN PENTHOUSE!
The Bodyguard Collection
Fourteen Complete Tales Of Sex And Adventure by David de Vries & Glenn Lumsden
From The Creators Of The Southern Squadron And Puppet Master

Penthouse, cheesecake sexual references and soft-core sexual activity is at a premium.".

Bodyguard will be an 'adults only' collection, and ships in a clear plastic wrapper.

Super Earth Day

SUPERMAN: Earth Day 1991 is a 48-page prestige format one-off, as the Man of Steel tries to do his part in cleaning up the environment.

Creators are Roger Stern (script) and Kerry Gammill (pencils) plus Dennis Janke (inks).

It ships April 2 with a $4.95 cover price.

Eros adds 5

LATEST recruit to the Eros line of adult comics is the veteran artist of **Buster**'s 'Galaxus' and **Lion**'s 'Adam Eterno', F. Solano Lopez.

From a Barreiro script, Lopez illustrates **Young Witches** 1.

As well as their continuing titles, **Ironwood, Liz & Beth,** Wally Wood's **Cannon** and **Wendy Whitebread,** Eros is adding five new titles to this month's shipping.

In addition to **Young Witches,** they are:

- **Up from Bondage** ("America's first gay erotic comic": 36 b&w pages) $2.95
- **Candice Revealed 1** (the **Metacops** creators with a 17th century sex farce) b&w 24pg $2.25
- **Shooty Beagle 1** (a sexy send-up of **Apocalypse Now**) 24pg $2.25
- **Sinnin' 1** (1960s fan artist Grass Green with a follow-up to his Eros **Marooned** title)$2.25

Given the current climate, would-be purchasers may find they have to travel to America to get most of the above, as UK importers are having difficult getting customs approval on the Eros line.

Comico back in strength

WITH NEW investment aid, Comico's promised titles of ten months ago will be in shops this month.

The line-up consists of:

- **Jaguar Stories 1** (Seagle & Allred) 32pgs b&w $2.50
- **Universal Intergalactic Discovery Co Ltd 1** (Bruce Zick) 48 colour pages $4.95
- **Comico Illustrated 2** (anthology by Gerard Jones, Ho Che Anderson, Mark Badger, Kelley Jones & John K Snyder) $2.50
- **Art of Akira vol 2** (cel repros from theOtomo hit anime) 48pg black & white, softcover $6.00
- **Kingdom of the Dwarfs 2** (wenzel & Walsh) reprint of illustrated 1980s novel. 48pgs part colour (2 of 3) $4.95
- **Metalkill 1** (Chaney & Gutiurrez) b&w 32pg sf $2.50
- **PU 1: INFLICTOR** (Dwayne Ferguson) PU as in Parodies Unlimited, this issue featuring The Inflictor, a Punisher spoof. To follow; The Vampire Le Spit and Web-Head. b&w $2.50
- **The Amazon Graphic Novel** Reprints Steve Seagle's limited series. 56 colour pgs $6.95
- **Art of TMNT 1** Animation art catalogue taken from cartoon series. 48pg b&w $6.00

Despite the above impressive quantity of titles available this month, Comico is noticeable by its total absence from the May shipping listings. As some of their titles are meant to be monthlies, it would appear the company still has to overcome some problems.

IN BRIEF

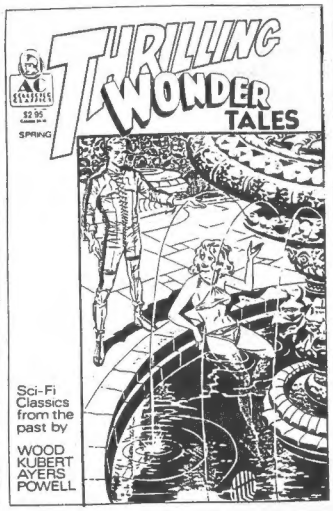
DAREDEVIL 292 to 293 continues the moral conflict theme as the Punisher guest stars once more in a script by Dan Chichester, who takes over the creative reins from Ann Nocenti.

Artwork continues to be provided by Weeks & Williamson, with the first part on sale now and issue 293 shipping to the UK on April 2.

CONNECTING this year's **Daredevil, Punisher** and **Captain America** annuals will be the ongoing SHIELD versus Hydra conflict, with six new villains introduced.

All will be 64 page $2.00 titles, and the three ship in April.

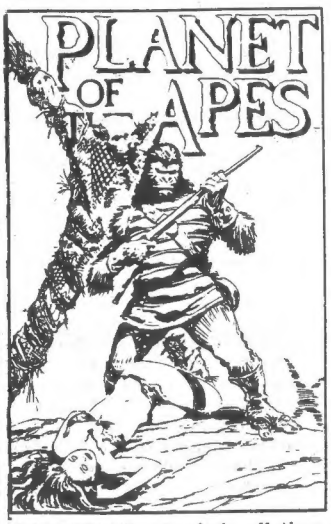
1950s GREATS



THRILLING Wonder Stories is the latest in AC Comics Collector's Classics series, and debuts this month.

Featuring classic tales by Wood (Kenton of the Star Patrol), Bob Powell (Thun'da), Joe Kubert and Dick Ayers, the $2.95 quarterly will be in black and white with added grey halftones.

TRUOG ON APES



ADVENTURE Comics' all-time best-selling series, **Planet of the Apes** has attracted top talent to its 1991 production.

Both Paul Gulacy and **Animal Man** artist Chas Truog are signed up for cover art as the cult-hit series promises an Ape wedding on the horizon.

THE SKIN TRADE

FOLLOWING the success of their first two **Alien Nation** projects, Adventure Comics is releasing **Alien Nation: The Skin Trade** as a 4-issue mini-series beginning this month.

Publisher Dave Olbrich said of the 20th Century Fox licenced titles, "Sales on the first two mini-series were so overwhelmingly favourable that a third series was put into production."

Introducing Newcomer detective Mason Jr, heavily influenced by old gumshoe movies during his stay in quarantine, the new mini-series is written by Lowell Cunningham with art by Leonard (The Eliminator) Kirk and **Ape Nation**'s Terry Pallot.

GA IN SHERWOOD

GREEN ARROW Annual 3 features Oliver Queen finally meeting his legendary idol, Robin Hood.

Sherwood Forest provides the setting, as Ollie and Dinah mysteriously travel back in time to the days of Robin Hood where they're called upon to save the forest from a black achemist who is out to poison and destroy the magical woods.

This special issue is co-written by Mike Grell with Mark Ryan, the American tv star of the Showtime "Robin Hood" series.

With a Mike Grell cover, and interior art by Pensa, the $2.95 new format title ships on April 23.

SHULK BOOSTERS

SALES-boosting guest stars are lined up for **She-Hulk 29** in a story by Louise Simonson.

Wolverine, the Hulk and Spider-Man feature as She-Hulk battles Venom in the first part of a two-issue story leading up to John Byrne's return in issue 31.

She-Hulk 29, priced $1.50, ships to the UK on May 7.

LET'S GO ROUND AGAIN

SPIDER-MAN SAGA, the 4-part re-telling of Spidey's early years, has been rescheduled.

Issue 1, priced $2.95, now ships May rather than the originally announced January.

Issue one covers the first hundred **Amazing Spider-Man.**

IN BRIEF

MARVEL's Thor celebrates 350 continuous issues since his first appearance in **Journey into Mystery 83** with the release of issue 432 shipping to the UK on March 26.

To celebrate, it will be a 'big change' double-size $1.50 issue by the usual team of DeFalco, Frenz and Sinnott.

TURTLES TWO

THE SECOND **TMNTurtles** movie, subtitled "Secret of the Ooze" is adapted into a $2.50 Archie comic which ships to the UK early April.

As well as the turtles, Splinter and the return of Shredder, it features two new mutant animals, a wolf and a snapping turtle.

RING COLLECTION

DC IS COLLECTING the 4-part mini-series **The Ring** into a single volume. The adaptation of the Richard Wagner classic opera is handled by Roy Thomas and Gil Kane, and the 200 page full colour trade paperback ships to the UK April 23, price $19.95.

MARVEL ANNUALS

THE FOUR 'cosmic' Marvel titles have a linked story for their annuals this year.

Fantastic Four, Thor, Silver Surfer and **Guardians of the Galaxy** feature a follow-up to last year's "Days of Future Present" annual series with the Guardians as a common link.

The story starts in April in the **FF** and **Thor** annuals, to be concluded in May in the other two titles.

TREK ANNIVERSARY

AS THEIR contribution to the 25th anniversary of **Star Trek**, DC is reprinting their most popular story "The Mirror Universe Saga".

Originally published in 1984 to 1985, across issues 9 - 16, the story is written by Mike W. Barr and illustrated by Tom Sutton and Ricardo Villagran.

Star Trek: The Mirror Universe Saga is a 192 page trade paperback, priced $19.95, shipping on April 16.

FOLLOWING the numbered triangles on **Action, Superman** and **Adventures of Superman** to enable readers to know what order to read the titles in, DC is using the symbol "A 2001" on the covers of this year's 11 annuals which cross-over with the **Armageddon 2001** plotline and 2-issue mini-series commencing this month.

AKIRA TPB

THE **Akira Trade Paperback,** reprinting issues 1-3 of the Epic title is now shipping this month, following a 6 month setback.

Full colour throughout, it carries a $14.95 cover price.

BATMAN ANNUAL

BATMAN ANNUAL 15 continues the alternative futures concept utilised in **Superman Annual** 3, in a story set in the year 2001.

The Joker is a popular tv chat show host, and Batman is sentenced to death for the murder of The Penguin.

Senator Tim Drake becomes Robin once more to search for the secret that will save his mentor's life.

Guest stars of this Alan Grant scripted story are Catwoman and Anarky.

Priced $2.00, this 64 page newsprint annual ships to the UK on April 16.

SCOTT FREED

MISTER MIRACLE is set to be cancelled with issue 28, shipping April 16.

In the final issue, Scott Free must choose whether he wishes to lead a normal life on Earth, or continue his career as a super-hero escape artist, or recover his godhood as a son of New Genesis.

GROO LIVES

THE OFT-PROMISED **Life of Groo** graphic novel has once again been rescheduled.

This 64-page $9.95 title is now set to ship on April 23rd.

REMAINDERS

IN AN UNUSUAL move, reminiscent of the 1962 DC **Comic-Pacs** (with 4 x 12¢ comics in a bag for 47¢), DC is launching a series of **Multi-Packs.**

While the Summer **Pacs** contained 4 new issues, using a strong Superman title to sell backup Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen titles, the **Multi-Packs** seem to be simply re-releases of unsold back issues.

The **Superman** shrink-wrapped multi-pack contains issues between 19 and 25; Wonder Woman between 10-12 and 19-24 and the Batman set is either 397-399 or 414-416.

DC promises the three issues in each pack will be consecutive, and the packs retail at $2.25, ie 75¢ a comic.

Marvel's new dream warrior

SLEEPWALKER will be Marvel's new title for April, aiming to combine the superhero appeal of **Spider-Man** with the eeriness of **Ghost Rider.**

Sleepwalker is an alien who guards the Mindscape - the extra dimensional realm that links all sentient creatures.

In a relationship similar to that of Danny Ketch and the Ghost Rider, Sleepwalker becomes trapped in the mind of college student Rick Sheridan, and can only walk the Earth while Rick is asleep.

Sleepwalker's powers include self-levitation, superhuman strength and warp vision - which enables him to alter reality in nightmarish ways.

Future promotional crossovers for Sleepwalker will include super-teams The X-Men, X-Factor, the Fantastic Four and The Avengers, whom Rick summons to evict the alien from his mind.

Sleepwalker will also feature in Marvel's mega-crossover series, **The Infinity Gauntlet,**

where he will encounter Spider-Man.

Written by Bob Budiansky, the $1.00 April 9 shipping title will be drawn by **New Mutants** and **Nightbreed** artist Bret Blevins.

Original JLA in guest-shot

C'N YOU FIGGER THAT?! WHAT KINDA SELF-RESPECTING BABE TURNS DOWN FRONT ROW SEATS TO A MAJOR DEMOLISH EVENT?
I DON'T KNOW GUY... MAYBE SHE HAS TOO MUCH SELF RESPECT
ICE? NAHH...
...CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH MORE ARRAYED I AM SINCE CATH TOOK OVER THE GROUP.
HE IS. IT'S ASTOUNDING. LAST WEEK HE ACTUALLY UN-CLENCHED HIS JAW.
ANY MONTH NOW WE'RE EXPECTING HIM TO UNCLENCH HIS--

JUSTICE LEAGUE International Quarterly 3 guests stars the original members of the JLA.

Kilowog and Mitch Wacky travel back through time and alien dimensions in an attempt to stop the Extremists from ever existing, so to save Wacky's world from having been destroyed.

Meanwhile J'onn J'onzz, Blue Beetle, Power Girl, Flash, Guy Gardner, Fire, Ice and the Silver Sorceress follow them, but run into the Justice League of America.

Original League guest stars include the Barry Allen Flash, Black Canary, Aquaman and the Hal Jordan Green Lantern.

This 80-page standard format title is priced $2.95 and ships to the UK on April 9.

Gladstone lose EC reprints

SUFFERING their second publishing setback in under a year, Gladstone Comics is losing its licence to reprint 1950s EC horror and science fiction comics.

Gladstone, under the joint ownership of Russ Cochran and Bruce Hamilton, quickly established its EC line of 48-page colour comics to replace its Disney line which was suddenly withdrawn last year.

But now, following various editorial disagreements, the Gladstone EC line ends with **Haunt of Fear** 2.

The company's last issues, already in shops, also consist of **Vault of Horror** 6 and **Tales from the Crypt** 6.

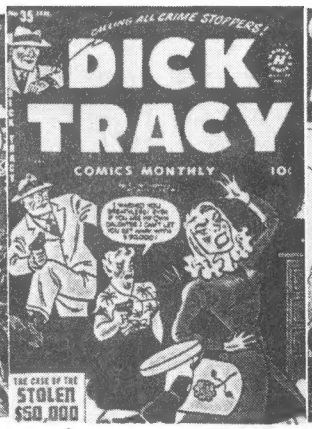
Russ Cochran maintains that the three title line will continue, but he will be producing them personally for copyright holder and **Mad** publisher William M. Gaines, outside of the Gladstone imprint.

While full details of this sudden move have yet to be made public, it would appear that Cochran felt his partner, Bruce Hamilton, was making editorial decisions without the consent of either Gaines or himself. This is said to have led to embarrassment between the parties concerned.

Twin companies Gladstone and Another Rainbow intend to continue with their **Dick Tracy** line and will be introducing two new material horror comics this summer.

Both of the **Dick Tracy** reprint titles are to be revamped, resulting in a newsstand black & white **Savage Sword of Conan** format title and for the direct sale market a prestige format series, **Dick Tracy Adventures by Chester Gould.**

On the new horror titles, publisher Bruce Hamilton is reported to be paying 'commensurate industry rates' for material.



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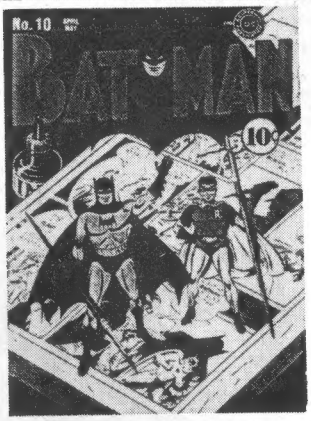

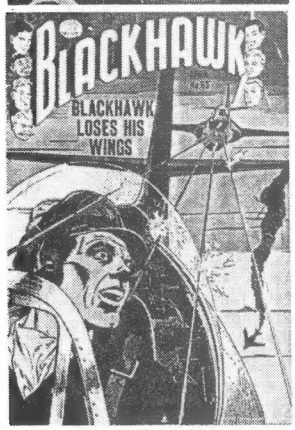

Gary K. Wolf, Harvard, MA (Author and creator of Roger Rabbit Characters)
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Steve Andrew, Comics 'N' Stuff – Amarillo, TX
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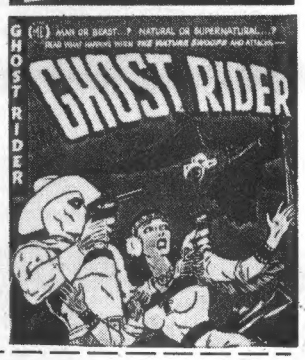

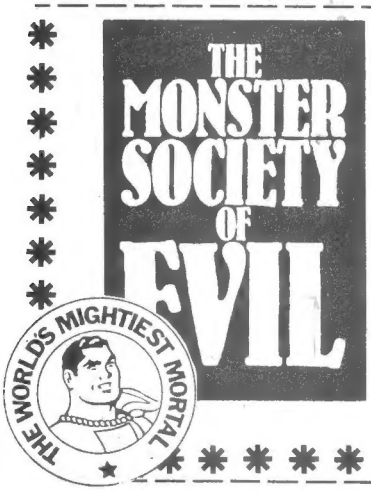

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IN BRIEF

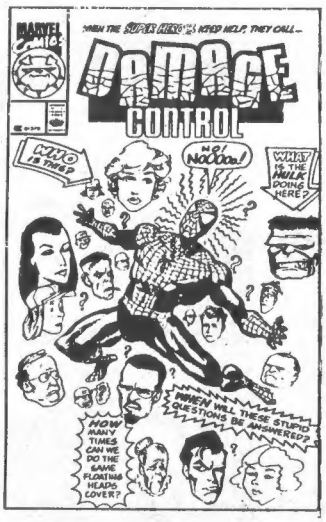
FOLLOWING the success of Marvel's 4-issue mini-series, **Deathlok** becomes an ongoing series beginning May 28.

To give the all-new series added momentum, Marvel first reprinted the 1990 prestige format mini-series as lower priced specials, and the new $1.75 monthly ties in with in directly, but with a greater emphasis on the mainstream Marvel universe.

Villains lined up for the series include Dr Doom, the Super Adaptoid and Ultron, while hero guests include Mr Fantastic, Misty Knight, Vision and Wolverine.

McDuffie and Wright provide scripts for penciller Denys Cowan and inker Mike Manley.

CONTROL III


DAMAGE CONTROL
WHO IS THIS?
NO! NOOOO!
WHAT IS THE HULK DOING HERE?
WHEN WILL THESE STUPID QUESTIONS BE ANSWERED?
HOW MANY TIMES CAN WE DO THE SAME FLOATING HEADS COVER?

BECAUSE OF the apparent success of the first two mini-series, Marvel is releasing a third **Damage Control** 4-issue humour series.

The series teams original writer Dwayne McDuffie with Kyle **(Dick Tracy, Shadow)** Baker.

Issue 1 of this $1.25 series ships April 16.

ECLIPSE CLASSICS

TWO new Eclipse adaptations of classic novels

Anne McCaffrey's award-winning **Dragonflight**, the first in her Dragonriders of Pern series is adapted into a 48 page colour prestige format comic book with art by Lela Dowling and Cynthia Martin.

Issue one (of 3) carries a $4.95 cover price.

Richard Matheson's twice filmed classic future horror story **I Am Legend** also takes the 3-issue adaptation route, courtesy of Steve Niles and artist Elman Brown.

The 64 page first issue is in black and white and has a cover price of $5.95.

OLYMPIANS

"JOCKULARITY, Laughs, & Insanity" (sic) is Marvel's own spelling, punctuation and description of **Olympians.**

This new 2-issue series claims to be "a lighthearted super-heroic spoof in the **Marshal Law** tradition".

The story centres around Max Tarrant, the Director of Super Heroes under the Minister of Superheroics in London's Claremont Building.

Stephen Jewell writes and Gary Chaloner + Gary Martin draw this $3.95 micro-series which obviously has to be seen to be believed.

MARVEL CHILLS

ROCK, Rhythm, and Rap Entertainment Group is a new Marvel division specialising in publications oriented towards today's contemporary music scene.

Its first publication, **The Official Rap Dictionary,** is a 96 page colour title in the bookshelf format, priced $4.95

Marvel announces that the book is the musical equivalent of **Das Kapital** and will appeal to fans of US cartoon show **Kid 'N Play** (soon to be a Marvel title) and rappers **Run D.M.C.** and **M. C. Hammer.**

Definitions in this book include **Box** (boks) n A large hand-held stereo radio, **Ace, Chill, Bad** and **Bust The Move.**

The title will be aimed at the direct sale comics market, with the idea of bringing mass market consumers into comics shops.

The punctuation error (, and) in the Rock, Rhythm, and Rap Comics imprint is Marvel's mistake, not **Comics International's.**

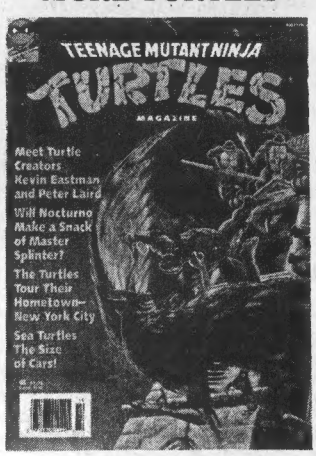
MR E SETBACK

DC's SPIN-OFF from the 4-part **Books of Magic** series, **Mister E** has hit scheduling problems.

The 4-part $1.75 mini-series by SF author KW Jeter and artist John K Snyder III will no longer launch March 26.

The revised shipping date is May 5, to allow the spin-off to start after the completion of the delayed **Books of Magic** rather than in the middle of it.

MORE TURTLES


TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES
MAGAZINE
Meet Turtle Creators Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird
Will Nocturno Make a Snack of Master Splinter?
The Turtles Tour Their Hometown—New York City
Sea Turtles The Size of Cars!

AS WELL as their adult (Mirage) and mass market (Archie/Fleetway) editions, **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** now have their own quarterly magazine.

TMNT Magazine, priced $1.95, features a combination of features and strips and is produced for sale to the general market.

New Predator from Dark Horse

PREDATOR: Big Game is the title of the latest 20th Century Fox licenced title from Dark Horse Comics.

A 4-issue mini-series with a $2.50 cover price, it tells of two US Army troops on patrol coming up against a seven foot extraterrestrial, armed to the teeth and looking for trouble.

Though Corporal Enoch Nakai, a young American Indian sees a resemblance between the Predator and the legendary Indian "adilgashi" that haunts his dreams, it's soon clear that the alien has little time for legends.

Written by John **(Terminator)** Arcudi, the series is drawn by Evan Dorkin and Armando Gil, with Chris Warner covers.

Predator: Big Game 1 ships to the UK March 19.

Spidey Wedding trade paperback

FOR THOSE who missed it just four years ago, in the wake of Superman's engagement, Marvel is re-telling Spiderman's marriage.

With the massive publicity DC received over the Lois Lane proposal, Marvel has gathered all the relevant newspaper strip episodes, the comic book, and reports together to make a $12.95 trade paperback, **Spider-Man's Wedding.**

The book ships April 16.

DC bears gifts

HOT ON the heels of Marvel offering a gift for information (the **Spider-Man Platinum Edition**), DC is offering free presents to retailers who answer their new questionnaire.

All questions, asked in DC's June Coming Comics trade leaflet, relate to spin-off product (watches, posters, pins and such) and 15 lengthy questions are asked.

In exchange for suggestions and input, DC offers some surprising rewards.

As well as a **Batman; The Dailies** postcard, the first 200 respondents can choose between:

- A **Watchmen** portfolio
- A Perez **Batman** portfolio
- A **Justice League** 3 (with test cover)
- A **Firestorm** 61 (with test cover).

Test covers? Oh, yes. Before **Legends of the Dark Knight** 1 with its differing covers and the recent green or gold **Spider-Man** covers, DC had already tested more than one cover on a comic.

These two titles had been the guinea pigs of a special marketing experiment. As well as the regular editions seen in direct sale shops and elsewhere, in 1987 DC tried special 'test covers' on a limited quantity of newsstand copies.

Putting an additional **Superman** logo above the main **Justice League** (or **Firestorm**) title, the intention was to see if the use of DC's top character would further enhance sales.

The results are taken to have been inconclusive, as no overt follow-up moves were made as a result.

But, in inevitable fan fashion, speculators made the test issues into valuable collectors' items.

Last year's **UK Price Guide** listed the **JL** 3 test cover copy at £80 and the **Firestorm** 61 test copy at £70. The US **Overstreet Price Guide** gave them an American value of $80 and $45. Because of their presumed scarcity they became hot curiosity items.

They were so hot, in fact, that forged copies, using double sided colour photocopies added to regular interiors surfaced out of America earlier this year.

But now we discover, four years later, that DC is sitting on enough copies of each to release 200 to retailers filling in questionnaires.

Quite how that will affect their value in the 1991 **Price Guides** will be seen when they are published next month.

IN BRIEF

THE LATEST in the line of reshaped **2000AD** reprints under the Fleetway/Quality imprint is **M.A.C.H. 1.**

Continuing the confusing policy of black & white titles carrying a higher cover price than colour reprints, it bears a $1.95 US price for its 32 b&w pages, with a UK price of 95p.

Next month, in the same format **The VC's** is added once again to the reprint line.

GHOSTLY GUARDIAN

EVEN THE distant future at Marvel isn't save from Ghost Rider crossovers!

Guardians of the Galaxy 13 and 14 feature a 2-part story in which the heroes battle ... the Ghost Rider of the 31st century.

DOUBLE DRAGON

MARVEL's first comicbook based on a video game releases on May 21st.

Double Dragon is a 6-issue limited series based on the popular video game, currently up to Double Dragon III and rising.

Licenced from Acclaim, this $1.00 priced series is produced by McDuffie, Stroman and Vancata.

MUTANT ANNUALS

NEW WARRIORS Annual 1 joins the 1991 mutant annual storyline, "Flesh Tears".

Together with **New Mutants Annual** 11, **X-Men Annual** 15 and **X-Factor Annual** 6, the first **New Warriors Annual** joins in the fond farewell to the current incarnations of the mutant teams before the summer shakeup.

Marvel describes the main plot as a prologue to the revamped teams, with a story taking place after **New Mutants** 100 which leads directly into resolving the Muir Island storyline beginning in the May **X-Men** (278) featuring the Shadow King.

Fabian Nicieza scripts all four annuals as well as the back-up story detailing the final case of Freedom Force, and setting the stage for the debut of the revamped X-Factor team.

While no one can criticise the effectiveness of Marvel's marketing strategy, using four annuals as a prologue to launch new titles is a far cry from the value-for-money days of annuals containing several complete stories.

MORE X-MEN

MARVEL SUPER HEROES 6, price $2.95, begins a new 3-part X-Men story by writers Roy & Dann Thomas, with art by Rich Buckler and Jim Sanders.

Guest-starring Doc Sampson and the Abomination, the story concerns the mutant-hating Sentinels kidnapping gamma-radiated beings.

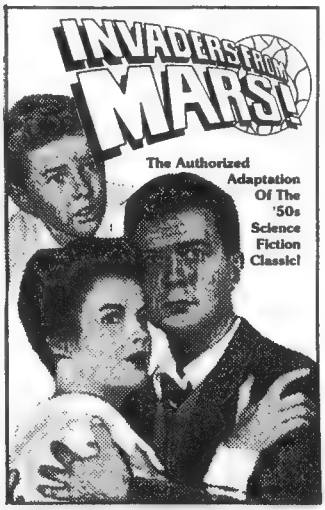
The issue also features Power Pack (Higgins & Buccellato), Speedball (Duffy, Ditko & Adkins) and Israeli Super Agent Sabra (Lobdell, Abrams & Buccellato).

MORE GOLD

THE LATEST Marvel title to go into reprinting with gold covers is **New Warriors** 1.

Priced $1.00, it ships to the UK on May 28.

FIFTIES RETRO



INVADERS from Mars is a collection of the 3-issue mini-series adapting the classic William Cameron Menzies s-f movie.

Published in April by Eternity Comics, the adaptation is by Steve Jones and Sandy Carruthers.

A second book, **Invaders from Earth,** is planned for later in the year.

MARVEL TEAM-UP

DAREDEVIL is the latest Marvel hero to guest star the new Ghost Rider in his pages, as issue 294 begins a two-issue team-up.

Written by Dan Chichester, with art by Lee Weeks and Al Williamson, the May 7 shipping issue picks up from the two-part Punisher guest shot, and involves The Hand setting up in New York.

Guest starring the Kingpin, who uses the conflict to further his own expansion, the story also reveals the role Hydra's Baron Strucker played in founding The Hand.

Karen Page is also re-established as a major supporting character during the team-up storyline.

• EXTRA EVENT • EXTRA EVENT • EXTRA EVENT • EXTRA EVENT • EXTRA EVENT • EXTRA EVENT •

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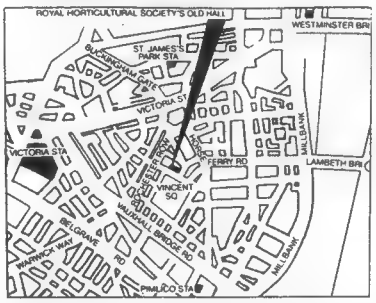

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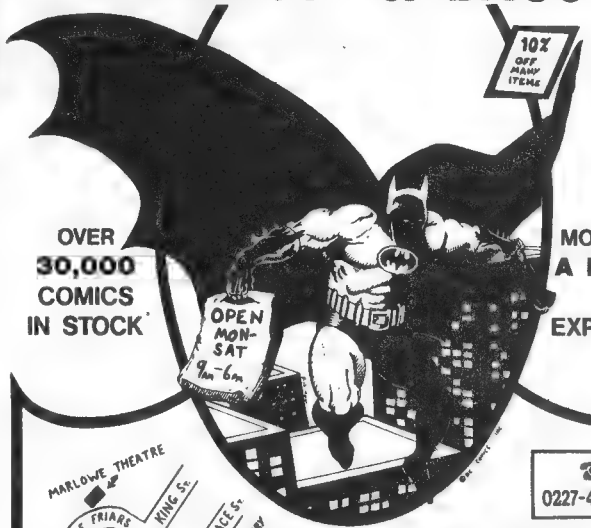

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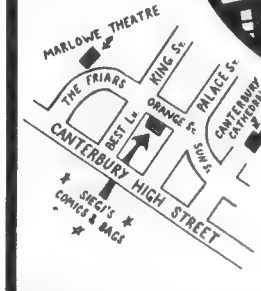

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IN BRIEF

ECLIPSE is reprinting the first two issues of **Tapping the Vein** into a 128 page edition with art by Bolton, Hampton, Janson and Russell.

The paperback edition of this full colour 8¼ x 11" book has a cover price of $14.95, while the hardback edition with dustjacket retails at $35.00.

Both editions ship March.

MIRACLEMAN

MIRACLEMAN Book Four: The Golden Age concludes in the 21st issue of the Eclipse colour title.

Creators Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham bring the series to a close in a story tentatively titled "Carnival".

Celebrating the Miracles' defeat of The Adversary Bates, the story tells of a worldwide party centring on New London.

With a Dave McKean cover, the 32 page $2.50 title ships March.

ZOT CONCLUDES

SCOTT McCloud's **Zot!** concludes with issue 36, a double-size issue shipping from Eclipse in March.

This 48 page black & white title carries a $2.95 price.

COLLECTED CHOLLY

THE ORIGINAL adventures of **Cholly & Flytrap** by Arthur Suydam are being collected into a 64-page graphic novel by Marvel's Epic Comics.

Following the 3-part **New Adventures of Cholly & Flytrap** mini-series ending in February, this $9.95 title reprinting work from **Epic Illustrated** ships March 26.

MORE HARRISON

DEATHWORLD Book 2 is a new 4-part series from Adventure Comics adapting Harry Harrison's **Deathworld 2** novel.

Adapted by John Holland with art by Marcello Campos, the first issue, priced $2.50, ships March.

EXCALIBUR

A NEW **Excalibur** 48 page special ships from Marvel May 21st.

Priced $2.95, by Mike Higgins and Tom Morgan, the story tells of Meggan being possessed by the spirit of a powerful telepath from the X-Men's past that not even Phoenix can help her overcome.

In a seance meant to clear up the mystery, the members of Excalibur come face to face with ghosts from their own pasts.

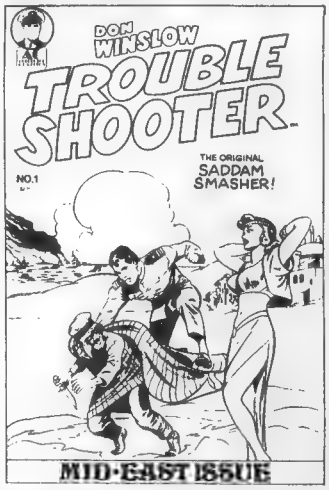
ANNIVERSARY

THE FIFTH Anniversary Special of **Dark Horse Presents** is a 112 page black and white extravaganza.

It features new stories of the company's most popular characters by their regular creators including Give Me Liberty (Miller & Gibbons), The American (Verheiden, Braithwaite & Campanella), Aliens (Arcudi & Bisley), The Aerialist (Matt Wagner), Concrete (Paul Chadwick), an epilogue to the Aliens vs Predator mini-series and much more.

Perfect bound, this $9.95 title ships March 26.

SADDAM SMASHER

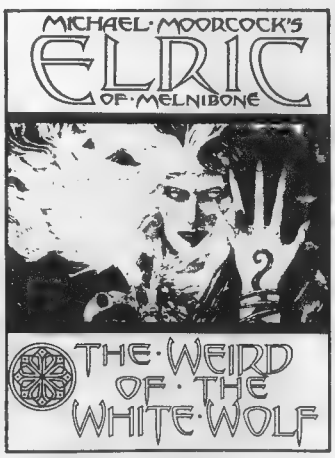


DON WINSLOW, Trouble Shooter is a new black and white title from AC Comics with the subtitle "The Original Saddam Smasher".

Reprinting from Fawcett's 1943-1958 73 issue run, the first issue picks stories by artists Carl Pfuefer and John Jordan fighting Middle Eastern menaces on the desert sands, "much as our military is doing today" as AC tell us.

The 36 page first issue, priced $2.75, ships in May.

MOORCOCK



CONTINUING their deluxe limited editions of Moorcock's **Elric** comics, Graphitti Designs is releasing **Elric: Weird of the White Wolf** in May.

This 140 page compilation of the First Comics series is by Roy Thomas, Michael T. Gilbert, P. Craig Russell and George Freeman and is a hardback volume, limited to 1200 copies.

With the usual Graphitti care, it includes illustrated endpapers, Smyth sewn binding, a signature plate and embossed hard covers.

With a wraparound dust jacket cover by Robert Gould, the volume retails at $39.95.

Lobo to take on The Demon

THE DEMON 12 features the promised guest star as Lobo takes on Etrigan.

Behind a painted Simon Bisley cover, Alan Grant tells a tale of true mayhem and psycho-farce as two of DC's nastiest creations battle it out.

The new format $1.50 title, with art by the usual Semeiks and Rodier team, also delves deeper into the mystery around Klarion the Witch-Boy and ships to the UK on April 16.

Johnny Blaze reprint mini

FURTHER INCREASING the profile of their new Ghost Rider series, Marvel is releasing a 7-part mini-series entitled **The Original Ghost Rider Rides Again.**

Beginning with a May 14 shipping issue, the series reprints the final 14 issues of the 1973-1981 run (issues 68-81).

Hardly collector's items, the original issues were obviously considered poor sellers, hence the title's cancellation, and guides place them at having little over cover price value, and most comic shops relegate them to the 'bargain bins'.

But the character, with such a classic adventure story name, has led one of the most complex histories in comics.

Fact File: Ghost Rider

The name first came to prominence in the famous Vaughn Monroe song, "Riders in the Sky", written by Stan Jones and released by HMV (serial BD 1247, for purists).

While the song title is often mis-quoted, it does contain the familiar chorus "Yipee-aye-ae, yipee-aye-o; Ghost Riders in the sky". Publishers Magazine Enterprises took the name, coupled it with a visual similar to the Disney movie character "The Headless Horseman" and released **Ghost Rider 1** (A-1 issue 27) in 1950.

Best remembered for its Frazetta covers and Dick Ayers art, the series lasted 14 issues, including a guest appearance by Dick Briefer's Frankenstein (issue 10).

He then appeared in A-1's **Best of the West** 1-12, 1951-1954, **Bobby Benson's B-Bar-B Riders** 13-15 (Ayers, with Frazetta cover issue 13), **Black Phantom 1** (1954), **Great Western** 11 (1954), **Tim Holt** 11-41 (with various Frazetta covers, horror stories and even one involving a liquid hallucinogenic drug) and finally in **Red Mask** 42 - 50 (1954-57).

Though that marked the end of Magazine Enterprises, Ghost Rider refused to stay dead.

When Israel Waldman bought the card molds (for platemaking) to a range of old comics, he used them to launch his IW (Super) Comics.

Issue 8 of IW's **Great Western** reprinted the origin of Ghost Rider from **Tim Holt** 11, behind a new Fred Guardineer cover in 1963.

But as the IW reprint had not secured copyright on the name, when it fell into public domain in 1967, Marvel snapped it up, as they had done previously with Daredevil, originally a Lev Gleason title.

Marvel's **Ghost Rider** (1-7, 1967) was an exact duplicate of the 1950s hero in appearance, right down to Dick Ayers producing the art. But Stan Lee's superhero approach, complete with secret identity and gimmick powers, failed to meet with the success of his contemporary heroes.

Refusing to stay down, Ghost Rider was re-launched by Marvel under three years later in their giant-size second series of **Western Gunfighters** where he appeared in issue 1-7 before being dropped in favour of 1950s reprints.

Like all good ghosts, he rose again, under ex-Will Eisner assistant Mike Ploog as teen biker Johnny Blaze in **Marvel Spotlight 5** (1972), continuing to issue 11 before starring once again in a **Ghost Rider** comic.

To add further convulutions to the story, Marvel resurrected the western Ghost Rider character once more, in a 6-issue 1974-1975 reprint of their 1967 series, changing the title to **Night Rider.**

Stan Jones, or his estate, certainly missed out on a fortune by not recognising those little letters TM almost 50 years ago!

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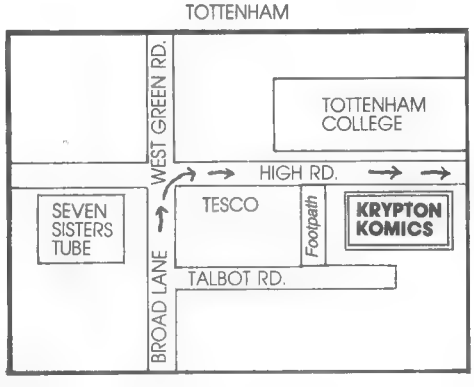

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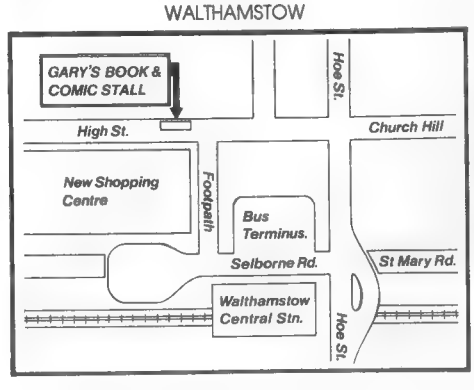

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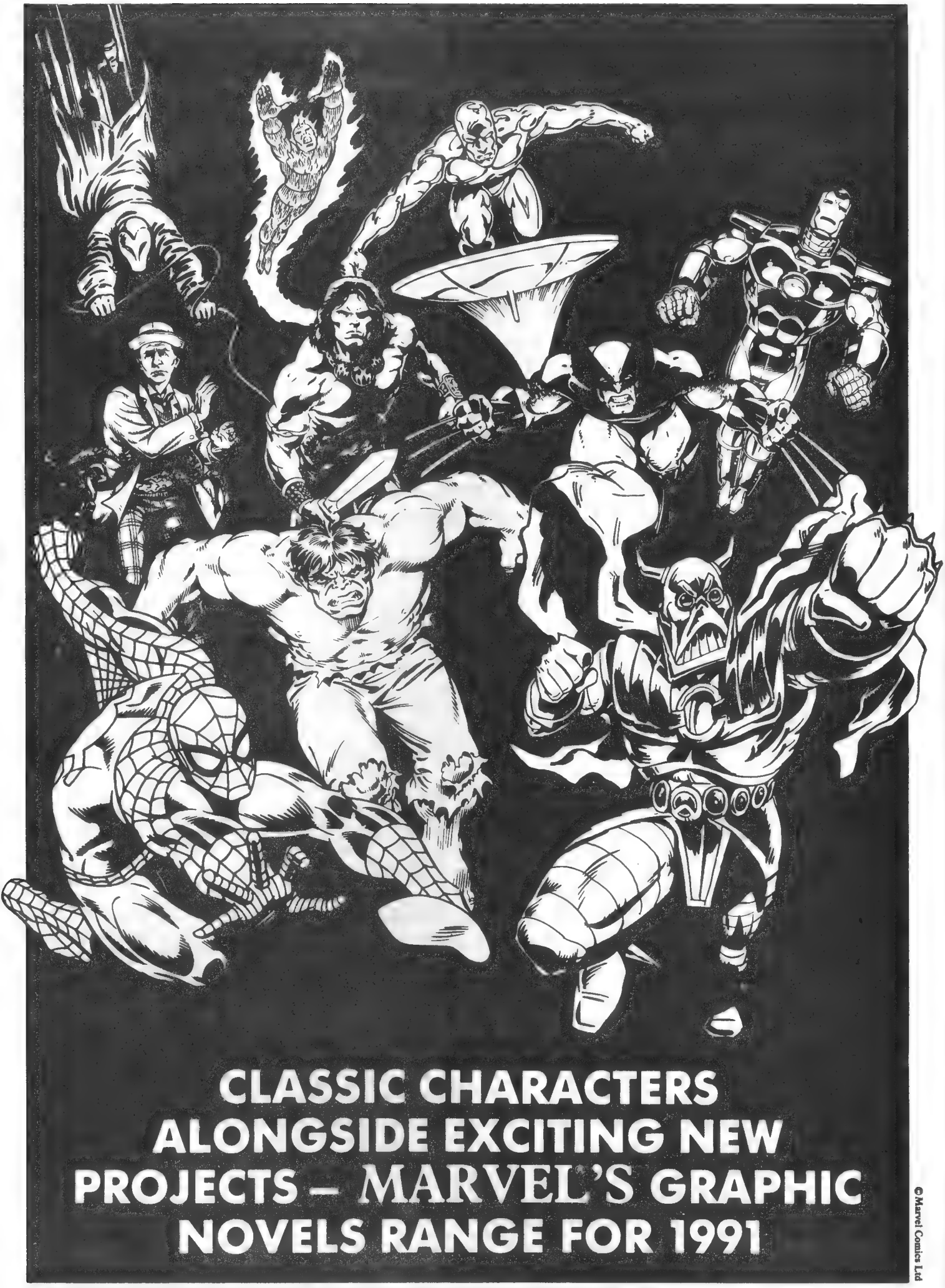

CLASSIC CHARACTERS ALONGSIDE EXCITING NEW PROJECTS – MARVEL'S GRAPHIC NOVELS RANGE FOR 1991

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NEWS

europe

Disney relaunch from Fleetway

THIS MONTH has seen the launch of a new line of Disney comics from Fleetway.

Disney Weekly, which aims at the main 7-11 year old market is a 32 page 50p colour title containing rescripted and recoloured work from France, Italy and America.

Disney and Me will be following shortly as a pre-school education and amusement 48 page title, in part utilising updated material from the 1970s IPC **Disneyland** title.

A new department within Fleetway, the Disney group, which will also be publishing Classic Albums and Specials, is headed by publisher Julie Goldsmith and ex-Marvel UK nursery group staff Michael Phipps (editor) and Cathy Szeputi (assistant editor).

Previous Disney licencees, London Editions Magazines, still express concern over the sudden cancellation of their right to produce Disney titles in the UK, so soon after they had expanded their line and injected over £500,000 into promotions.

With their **Disney Weekly** having launched at over 100,000 sales plus four other titles having been stopped, it is estimated that the company surrendered monthly sales in the region of 600,000 through losing Disney.

"If it had happened five years ago it would have been a major blow," commented London Editions' managing editor Brian Clarke.

"The Disney line made up 80% of what we published then, when we lost it, it was only around 20%."

In an attempt to satisfy the licensor's wishes, the last few issues of the London Editions Disney titles had become more pop and fashion orientated and moved away from the traditional approach.

Of the new Fleetway line, Renee Deutsch, Disney's head of UK Consumer Products Division said, "We will be working together (with Fleetway) and totally transforming the face of Walt Disney comic magazines through a series of major new title developments.".

Fleetway's managing director Peter Barber commented, "We are extremely pleased to be working with Disney on these major new projects. 1990 has been a very impressive year for us, particularly in the area of licensed publications and we are looking forward to a very successful partnership with Walt Disney."

With Fleetway being part of the Maxwell publishing empire, the recent launch of a "Disney Mirror" section in the group's 3.8 million selling newspaper may well have been a major factor in the change in licensee.

(DGS/SR)

Return of Pressbutton in Viz publisher's Blast

JOHN BROWN Publishing's entry into mainstream comics, **Blast!**, is set to launch in the third week of May with a £1.50 cover price.

The 68 page part-colour package will have a Simon Bisley cover, featuring Mr. Monster, who appears inside in a complete new story by creator Michael T. Gilbert and Bisley.

The magazine's other six strips include a one-off Axel Pressbutton story by the original

Warrior creative team of 'Pedro Henry' and Steve Dillon and a new character Lazarus Churchyard.

The only serialised story in the magazine, "The Virtual Kiss" starring Lazarus Churchyard, is described by editor Stuart Green as "the great English cyberpunk graphic novel".

Written by **Speakeasy** regular Warren Ellis and drawn by D'Israeli, the story will appear across the first six issues before being collected into graphic novel form.

It tells of a 400 year old who, as Stuart Green told **Comics International**, "is wedded at the genetic base to constantly evolving plastic".

"Whenever threatened, his body goes into a warp spasm," Green continued. "Lazarus is contracted by Isis/Elec operative PJ Proby to trace

the killers of executive Maxine Brookner.

"Lazarus is translated into virtual reality and goes searching for the killers in the datasea."

With contracts still to be signed, Green was not at liberty to reveal other content which will reflect the titles aim to be an international comics magazine, using British, American and European creators.

Issue 2 also has a Simon Bisley cover, this time illustrating "Kyrn" a strip which first appeared in **A1** Book 2, together with a new English translation of Jordi Bernett's **Torpedo**, the continuing Lazarus Churchyard and a motorbike riding hellcat "Big Bertha", set in a futuristic metropolis where sex is banned.

Issue 3 will have a Lazarus cover by D'Israeli and a Charles Burns Dog Boy story reworked from its original newspaper strip presentation.

As well as its strip content, which will occupy 48 pages of the magazine, the middle 16 papers will be printed on slightly poorer quality paper for the **Speakeasy** insert, for which up to 8 pages of advertising is being allowed.

Blast! will be distributed to newsagents by Comag, the UK's largest national distributor who is also responsible for both US & UK Marvel titles in newsagents. Direct sale distribution will be handled by Titan.

No details concerning the final print figure have yet been decided, as major wholesalers including WH Smiths have yet to be approached.

Editorially, it is being produced by Stuart Green together with the company's new editorial director Dave Elliott, although Green expects to be completely in charge after the first few months. Green added that new recruit Fiona Jerome acts as "general assistant to both Elliott and myself".

Design of the magazine will be handled by regular **Speakeasy** designer Andy Forbes, while the new logo has been created by outsider Richard Blayney.

Rejecting the exclusivity of today's top name creators, Green stated that he is very interested in new and untried people submitting work for **Blast!**, and when asked for an opinion on the other new imminent comic launch, he commented, "In the last ten years, **Toxic!** has been the most exciting launch," but added a teasing "... so far!"

Xpresso - new Crisis Special from Fleetway

WHILE estimates of its circulation range from 16,000 to 60,000, Fleetway's monthly adult comic **Crisis** is to present a one-off special on sale May 18 across the country.

Xpresso, a 68 page £1.95 title will be presenting 8 examples of European strips and will have a print run in the region of 40-50,000.

Editor of both **Xpresso** and **Crisis** is Munich-born Michael Bennent, who, following his consultancy work for Titan Books on European graphic novels, joined Fleetway as **Crisis** deputy editor to Peter Hogan in January 1990.

Becoming editor of **Crisis** last summer, Bennent was instrumental in the inclusion of European material in the regular title which paved the way for **Xpresso**.

Nephew of famed movie actor Johnny Weismuller, 28 year old Bennent has gathered a selection of European work for **Xpresso** largely unseen in this country.

The special includes Milo Manara's "Commercial" which looks at Fellini's successful attempt to have all advertising removed from Italian tv broadcasts of his movies. Italian artist Mattotti, an ex-fashion house artist whose **Fires** is currently available through Penguin and Spanish artist Cabanes, whose **Heart Throb** won for him both Best Album and Best Artist awards at Angouleme, both have work included.

But the increased exposure than Bennent is giving to European strips is creating a growing concern for originating British creators.

With existing European material being cheaper than originated strips, while the publication broadens the medium, will the powers-that-be become reluctant to invest more heavily in origination in the future when presented with a cheaper and easier alternative?

An increasing number of British creators believe this to be the case, but they console themselves with the feeling that for the mass market, British readers still demand a more obviously home grown style of art and storytelling.

IN BRIEF

GOING OUT with a bang, or even a **Blast!**, the final issue of **Speakeasy** will be a Marvel mutants extravaganza.

On sale late March, the £1.50 issue will feature a Jim Lee mutant cover and contain interviews with X-creators Chris Claremont, Whilce Portacio and Jim Lee, as well as the magazine's regular features.

FANTAZIA IN THE DESERT

WHILE THE Middle East War proved thankfully short, Birminghambased Pegasus Publishing helped keep up morale by exporting 4,000 copies of their superhero magazine **Fantazia** to Allied troops.

The only newsstand comics feature magazine, **Fantazia** continues to pack in a wealth of information on superheroes in the media every month at £1.50 for 68 colourful pages.

BARCELONA FEST

THE 9th Annual Barcelona International Comics Festival has chosen Britain as its first ever 'guest country' for this year's event.

Held on May 9 to May 12, the theme will be a revised and updated "God Save the Comics" exhibition as previously hosted at Angouleme.

While further information will be published when announcements are made, details can be obtained directly from UK coordinator Paul Gravett at 156 Munster Road, Fulham, London SW6 5RA.

LOADED

INSPIRED yet disappointed by the Glasgow Comic Art Convention 1990, John Harrison and Simon Moon launched **Loaded.**

A quarterly Glasgow-based comic, **Loaded** is an end product of the impetus provided by the convention coupled with the editors' dismay at the lack of attention given to local talent.

Issue 1, the Jan - March 1991 end product of the editors' desire to give a professional-looking base for new talent, contains a wide mix of readable adult material and is worth supporting.

Copies are available at £1.50 from: **Loaded,** c/o Gary M. Gibson, 5 Hillhead Street, Hillhead, Glasgow G12 8PR

SLAINE TRILOGY CONCLUDES

THIS MONTH sees the release of the conclusion of Fleetway's **Slaine the Horned God** trilogy with the release of book 3.

Written by Pat Mills and painted by Simon Bisley, the 72 page softcover retails at £5.95.

Penciller of the Spaceways

Report by
ALAN WOOLLCOMBE

KEITH WATSON, widely regarded as the definitive **Dan Dare** artist after the legendary Frank Hampson, has apparently been taken off the strip.

After completing two Dare stories for Fleetway after the **Eagle** relaunch last spring (at which, at Fleetway's behest, he was a guest of honour), and despite favourable fan reaction, Watson's superlative artwork has not graced the pages of **Eagle** since.

"I don't know quite why that is," admitted a mystified Watson. "I was very happy doing it and the readers seemed to like it, but sadly Fleetway hasn't offered me any more stories."

Ironically, Watson's other adventure series, the long-running football strip **Roel Dijkstra** in the Dutch **Sjors & Sjimme** magazine (formerly **Eppo**) is also due to retire to the changing rooms shortly.

Thereafter, apart from the roaring trade he does in bespoke illustrations for long-time Dare fans, he will have no regular contact with the comics world.

Is this really the last we will see of his classic artwork and the "real" Colonel Dare?

Parting shot

WHILE **Revolver** ended as a regular monthly title abruptly with issue 7, Fleetway's proposed **Revolver Valentine Special** will be making a somewhat late appearance on March 23rd.

Retitled **Revolver Romance Special,** the 68 page colour package will feature a Brian Bolland cover and cost £1.95.

Its eleven complete stories will include thework of most of the regular **Revolver** team including Julie Hollings, Sean Phillips, John Smith, Myra Hancock, Garth Ennis, Glen Fabry, Ed Hillyer, Shakey Kane and Matt Brooker.

London Cartoon Centre in crisis

THE LONDON Cartoon Centre, Britain's only facility for the teaching of comic strip and cartooning skills, has fallen victim to a funding crisis.

With the demise of ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) and GLA (Greater London Arts) in combination with the current recession, the London Cartoon Centre has had to cut courses for next term and its future looks extrememly grim.

While it was, in part, set up three years ago by DC Comics kind donation of $15,000, a recent appeal for funds to the comics publishing industry has met with total apathy.

The benefits to publishers, the community and comics readers of such a centre is obvious. Past students have included Dougie Braithwaite (**DC, Dark Horse, A-1**), Ed Hillyer (**Dark Horse, Blast!**), Steve Marchant (**Fantastic Life, Good Times**) plus Martin Griffiths and Dermot Power (**Fleetway**).

The Centre needs help now, before hundreds of students lose the only form of comics education open to them.

Some fundraising events have been planned, including a benefit comic book and a day-long event in the summer, both of which need sponsors.

Additionally, anyone wishing to sponsor a class for a year to ensure that on-site training can continue should write for a costings breakdown to: **Eve Stickler, The London Cartoon Centre, 14 Conlan Street, London W10 5AR.**

Comics International has agreed to give space in future issues to promote various fund-raising events and welcomes any ideas readers may wish to submit. (DGS)

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FIRKIN GUIDE TO HUMAN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR
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A series of comics collecting together all the **FIRKIN THE CAT** strips from Fiesta magazine where they have been appearing for the past 8 years, and are one of the most popular features. Taking a lighthearted look at the varieties of Human sexuality, Firkin manages to be continually surprising just like real life, and continually amusing thanks to the writing of Tym Manley and Hunt Emerson's genius with the pencil and paintbrush. As Firkin observes:

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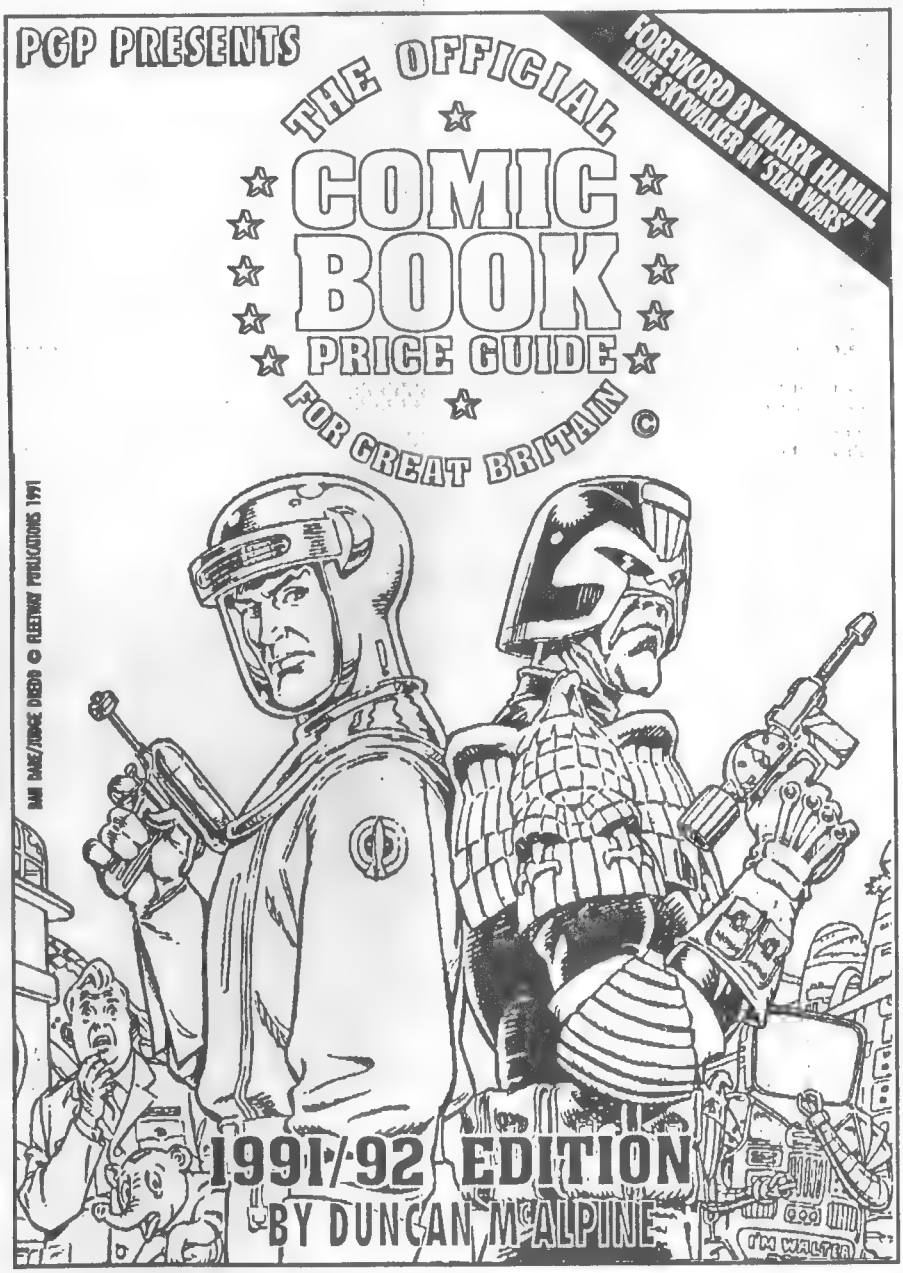

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Censorship versus bad taste

Since our last issue went to press, another comic shop has had a police seizure of some of its stock. While ***Phase II: The Dead Zone*** *has not responded to our interim request for further information on the situation, fellow comic shop owner* ***Skinny Melink*** *offers the following observations.*

A COMIC SHOP in Croydon was recently raided by the police, and certain 'objectionable' materials were seized.

These were not comic books, as you might expect to find in a comic shop; rather they were a series of postcards, produced by the shop owners themselves, of illustrations of severely deformed people, taken from a medical textbook.

Whether or not these pictures might be considered obscene is to be decided by police solicitors and perhaps, later, by the courts.

But that isn't really the point. What we're talking about here is good sense, and bad taste.

Is it really unusual to expect that some people might, reasonably, find such materials offensive? The pictures probably aren't obscene, but they certainly seem to be in bad taste. And is a comic shop, which by its very nature caters to large numbers of children and adolescents, really the place to be selling pictures of severely handicapped and deformed people? What's the point? Are people buying these illustrations for any other reason than to have a good laugh?

Why not sell pictures of Gulf War victims with severed limbs? That would be really hilarious. Or Ethiopian famine victims — they're really ludicrous with those huge bellies.

Further, in light of the current climate that has seen several comic shops raided by the police, most shop owners have subsequently reviewed their stock, some choosing to delete items of questionable value, such as **Black Kiss** and **Cherry**.

But instead of doing that, the Croydon shop chose to produce, sell, and display pictures of cripples. Are they really surprised that they were raided?

In America, the owner of an art gallery in Cincinnatti was recently prosecuted for exhibiting the photographs of the late Robert Mapplethorpe, many of which were homoerotic, some depicting various 'shocking' sado-masochistic practises.

Personally, I'm a great admirer of Mapplethorpe's work. His photos provide a glimpse into a world that most people have never really thought about or considered before, and despite the sometimes violent or 'twisted' subject matter, they radiate a surprising innocence.

This is conveyed both by the stark, bold simplicity of composition, and the gentle, almost angelic lighting. They are works of art, and as such they belong in an art gallery — but not in a comic shop. Nor would I display pictures of deformed and handicapped people in my comic shop, and I certainly can't be prompted to come to the defense of people with the poor judgement and bad taste to do so.

The owner of the Cincinnatti gallery, incidentally, was acquitted.

New Trident

PARALLEL MINDS is a new bi-monthly 24 page title from Trident Comics due out this month.

Created by John Short (**Fangs McCoy** and **Heartbreak Hotel**), the strip is a departure from his usual comedy writing as he adds yet another slant on the old idea of superheroes.

"Some people have said that **Watchmen** and **Dark Knight** were the last word in superheroes, but we believe they just show the way forward," Short explained.

Strip Search 2

THE SECOND Annual **Strip Search** exhibition will be moving from London to Manchester in April.

Currently held at the Willesden Green Library Centre (95 High Road, Willesden Green, NW10) until March 26, it will reopen at the Righton Gallery, Manchester Polytechnic, Cavendish Street, Manchester 15 on April 8 through to May 24.

But before leaving London, it has celebrity signings lined up by almost all of its sponsors.

On Saturday March 23, from 3.00pm to 5.00pm, signing will be held for **Steed & Mrs Peel** (Acme, Gibson), **A1** (Atomeka, Leach, S Moore, Hillyer, Kane and others) and **Velocity** (Acme: Warren & Gary Pleece).

Saturday March 23 will feature **Fires** (Penguin; Lorenzo Mattotti), **Seven Ages of Woman** (Knockabout; Gebbie, Hollings, Swain and Pearlman) and **Fast One** (No Exit Press; Grandfield).

March 23 will also be the date for a 2.00pm free slide presentation by Paul Gravett on "The New Breeds of Comics".

Comics International is a co-sponsor of **Strip Search 2** and free copies of the latest issue are available at the event.

"DOWNSIDE"

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IN BRIEF

GRANT IN CRISIS

FLEETWAY reports that despite the demise of their last adult comic, **Revolver**, the company's first older-market title **Crisis** continues to improve in its revised frequency larger page count format.

Grant Morrison is lined up to be contributing a prose and illustrations strip with artist Danny Valley on "Bible John", a mass murderer in Glasgow who was never caught.

The May issue will see **Crisis** adding to the Jim Morrison anniversary events, with both a Morrison strip and cover.

UNCLE BRIAN PRESENTS ...

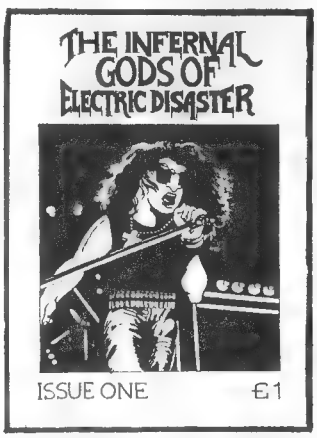
MANCHESTER area nostalgia buffs should watch out for the upcoming **Matinee Memories.**

To be held at Manchester's Odeon Cinema on Saturday morning, 20th April from 9.30 to 12.30, the event promises three hours of cartoons, s-f rarities, super-heroes and action packed shorts.

Tickets are £3.50 in advance or £4.50 on the door, and further information is available from **Matinee Memories,** 7 Berwick Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester M25 5BH.

Cheques sent should be made payable to B M Clarke.

ROCK UNSTEADY



THE INFERNAL Gods of Electric Disaster is a strip which has been appearing in Andy Nixon's **Angel Dust Funnies** small press title.

Creator - writer - artist Pete Doree has gathered the strips together into their own A5 b&w 32 page title.

Copies of this whimsical look at the struggles of a local rock band are available for £1.00 from the creator at 19 King Court, Capworth Street, Leytonstone, London E10 5AJ

ARKWRIGHT GAME

BRYAN (**The Nazz**) Talbot's creation **Luther Arkwright** has a new dimension added with the announcement of the soon to be released role-playing game.

James Brunton's 23rd Parallel Games (12 Balderstone Road, Broadgate, Preston, Lancs) has created a full history and background for Arkwright and his cast of characters.

The game is described by Talbot as being "very close to the books and designed for people who've never played an RPG in their lives".

In the **TMNTurtle** format, the game will be available direct at a 'substantial' discount off its £10 - 12 retail price.

TITAN BOOKS

Celebrating the company's eleventh year, Titan Books continues to compile the best of British and American comics with the following scheduled titles:

- **Aliens Book Two** (Verheiden & Beauvais) 112 pages, full colour, which by unfortunate coincidence has the same cover art as January's monthly **Aliens** reprint from Trident. 23/5 £7.50

- **The Komplete Krazy Kat vol 2** (Herriman) hardback edition only 20/6 £14.95
- **Hard Boiled** (Miller & Darrow) 144 pages, colour. July £8.95
- **Aliens: Earth War** (Verheiden & Kieth) 112 pages, clr 25/7 £7.50
- **Judge Dredd: The Deadman** (Wagner & Ridgway) 68 pages, black & white. July £5.95
- **Black Orchid** (Gaiman & McKean) 160 pages clr 18/7 £8.95

BIG DEAL

WHILE COMIC shops around the country are reporting trade beginning to look up after a bleak few months, the recession doesn't seem to have ever hit the mail order dealers.

"American Comics", the South West London based dealer reports having purchased a massive collection from a hard-pressed American dealer.

As seems to be the current trend, the American was bought out by Britain, with the collection costing $75,000.

Because of the tremendous discount given, Barrie Roness of American Comics reports that this will result in these 20,000+ comics from the 1950s onwards being offered at "decent" prices and being a real hedge against inflation!

Cashing in with reprints

FOR MANY YEARS, the 1967 **Penguin Book of Comics** was considered the definitive volume for research into British and American comics.

Produced by George Perry and Alan Aldridge, the volume proved so popular over the year that it was relaunched in October 1989.

While some newer comics converts may have thought it to be a brand new book, author Perry clearly established the reprint as a "period piece" in his new three page introduction.

Sadly, Hamlyn has failed to make any such disclaimer in its **International Book of Comics** by Denis Gifford, to be published March 28, priced £9.99.

In 1984, Hamlyn commissioned noted historian Gifford to produce the 256 page hardcover for exclusive distribution through WH Smith & Sons.

Now, a full seven years later, a softcover version with a far higher cover price is being heralded by the publisher's press office as a "definitive volume ... from **Comic Cuts** to the success story of **Viz**".

The press release continues, "the title also includes insights into the history and development of rarer publications such as **Poot** and **Strip**, as well as cult comic heros (sic) such as **Batman** and **Superman**".

The reality is that it's an expensive reprint of an outdated volume with only one page of text (plus a new Gifford introduction) added to cover **Viz** and its imitators.

This "guide into the world of strip cartoons" takes adult comics up to **Epic Illustrated,** has US 3-D comics finishing in the 1950s, mentions **Doctor Who** as a weekly, has Gerry Embleton still drawing Dan Dare for **The Eagle,** totally ignores horror comics after 1950 (despite Gifford being a regular contributor to **House of Hammer**), ends licenced titles with **Atari Force** and tells us that "nostalgic comics-publisher Dez Skinn recently revived them (the Marvelman Family) with great success in his adult-orientated **Warrior**".

No mention anywhere to the upsurge of independent US publishers First, Eclipse, Dark Horse or Pacific. No reference is made to the effect specialist shops had on the market, and **X-Men** receives the following reference, "... was an all-new outfit run by the handicapped Professor Xavier: Slim (sic) Summers (the Cyclops), Bobby Drake (Iceman), Hank McCoy (the Beast), and Warren by Jean Grey, the Marvel Girl." That's it, 8 lines and a repro of the cover to issue one for the most consistently popular US comic for over a decade.

But then, the whole of Marvel Comics only receive two columns of type in the entire book, whereas western comics are given twelve pages.

Perhaps the publisher can't be blamed, nor the press office which considers **Poot** and **Strip** to be rare, comics are 'strip cartoons' and that **Batman** and **Superman** are cult comic hero(e)s. They can't be experts of the whole range of books they publish.

But on what did they base their promotional copy "the title also includes insights into the history and development of ... **Poot** and **Strip**"?

In the new page of copy, the 'insights' consist of: "... and **Poot,** which has recently added bright colours and a banner-line "Britain's silliest comic", while **Strip**'s history and development is summed up with "As we move into the Nineties, a new vein of adult comics is being mined, stretching from **Deadline** (1988) and **Bogie Man** (1989) to **Strip** (1990) and **Revolver** (July 1990)". - Some insight!

While there is no denying Denis Gifford's love and knowledge of pre-1950 British comics, such a poorly researched 'international' volume, with only stamp collection style cover reproductions gives no overview of the industry and its development in any way.

If comicbooks are a seqential art, why do we see none whatsoever. Covers are fine, but with such sparce text given to major events, the reader can't even appreciate the true magic of the medium through the visuals, when no actual comics are shown.

The major problem with the publication of such a book is the effect it will have on the wholesale and retail industry's enthusiasm for any book which does live up to the publicity given to this shoddy volume.

THE PENGUIN CONTENDER

NOVEMBER 1991 will see the release of **The New Penguin Book of Comics,** which will serve to fill the gaps in the original and bring up to date major events of the last 24 years, in Britain, America, Europe and Japan.

While author Paul Gravett says the book is not a replacement, and makes no claim that it will be definitive, he adds, "It's meant to be a useful guide, a fun book showing how exciting comics can be".

He intends to cover UK and US history 'reasonably well', but without overlapping the earlier edition.

"The Perry book does a superb job up to the 1960s," the enthusiastic young historian added.

"But this book can't be published without acknowledging the effect that such outside factors as Moebius, Akira and manga has had on the market."

Compiled in collaboration with Peter Stanbury, Gravett's co-editor on **Escape,** the 276 page **New Penguin Book of Comics** sounds a far better buy than the Hamlyn book and is expected to carry the same cover price.

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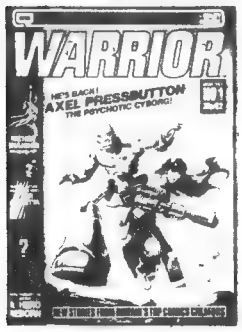

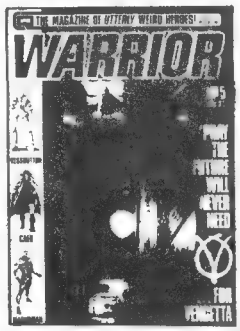

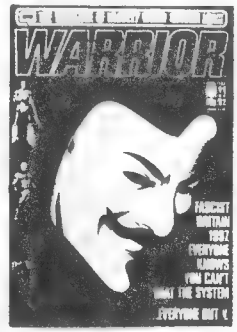

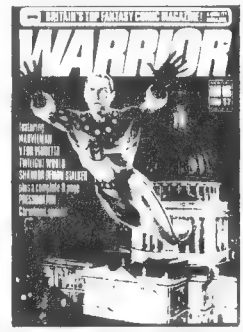

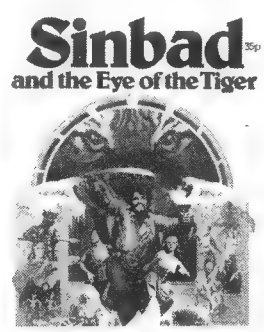

WARRIOR ••• ••• BACK ISSUES ••• •••HOUSE OF HAMMER

1 ("Marvelman" by Alan Moore/Garry Leach; "Shandor" by Steve Moore + John Bolton, "Spiral Path" by Steve Parkhouse; "V for Vendetta" by Alan Moore + David Lloyd; "Pressbutton" by Steve Moore + Steve Dillon; "Prester John" by Steve Moore & John Bolton; Dave Gibbons strip & Marvelman feature) **£1.50**

2 (as issue 1 except Gibbons replaced by "Madman" by Paul Neary) **£1.25**

3 (Alan Moore, Garry Leach, Steve Moore, Steve Parkhouse, John Bolton, Brian Bolland, Paul Neary) **£1.00**

4 ("Marvelman" by Alan Moore with Paul Neary; Alan Davis & Steve Dillon art; David Lloyd's "Golden Amazon"; plus regulars "V for Vendetta"; "Spiral Path"; "Madman";and "Shandor" with David Jackson artwork; "Pressbutton" origin) **£1.00**

5 (Alan Moore, Garry Leach, Alan Davis, Paul Neary, Steve Moore, Steve Dillon, Steve Parkhouse, Paul Neary) **£1.00**

6 (as issue 5 contributors plus Dave Gibbons) **£1.00**

7 (regulars, as issue 6, final "Madman" — Mick Austin art) **£1.00**

8 (regular strips, as issue 5, plus Hunt Emerson strip) **£1.00**

9 (regulars + "Warpsmith" by Alan Moore & Garry Leach) **£1.00**

10 (regulars + "Warpsmith" by Alan Moore & Garry Leach) **£1.00**

11 (regulars plus "Prester John" Pt 2 by S Moore & John Stokes) **£1.00**

12 (last "Spiral Path"; "Young Marvelman" by Alan Moore & John Ridgway; "BoJeffries" by Alan Moore & Steve Parkhouse; the "V for Vendetta" theme by A Moore & D Lloyd; "Prester John" end) **£1.00**

13 ("Zirk" by S Moore & Garry Leach; "V for Vendetta" by Alan Moore & David Lloyd; "Shandor" by S Moore & David Jackson; "Marvelman" by A Moore & A Davis; SF strip by Parkhouse/Ridgway) **£1.00**

14 ("Twilight World" part 1 of 4 by S Moore & Jim Baikie; "Ektryn" by S Moore & Cam Kennedy; "Shandor"; "V for Vendetta"; "Marvelman" by regulars) **£1.00**

15 ("Marvelman"; "V"; "Shandor"; "Twilight World"; "Pressbutton" by regulars + Steve Moore feature) **£1.00**

16 ("Marvelman"; "V"; "Shandor"; "Twilight World" by regulars + Dez Skinn interview on creating comics) **£1.00**

17 ("Marvelman Family" by A Moore & John Ridgway; "V"; "Twilight World" conclusion; "Shandor" by regulars + Alan Moore on creating "V for Vendetta") **£1.00**

18 ("Marvelman"; "V"; "Shandor"; Steve Parkhouse strip; Martin Asbury strip + Garry Leach interview on drawing comics) **£1.00**

19, 20, 21 Rare issues, none available

22 ("V for Vendetta" by A Moore & D Lloyd; "Big Ben" by Skinn & William Simpson; "Bogey" by Segura & Sanchez; "Liberators" by Skinn & John Ridgway; Frank Bellamy interview) **£1.00**

23 ("V for Vendetta" by A Moore & D Lloyd; "Shandor" by Steve Moore and John Ridway; "Bogey" by Segura & Sanchez"; "Big Ben" by Skinn & Simpson; Brian Bolland interview. **£1.00**

24 ("Pressbutton" by Steve Moore & Alan Davis; ""Zirk" by Steve Moore & Garry Leach; "Big Ben" by Skinn & Simpson; "Shandor" by Steve Moore & John Ridgway; "V for Vendetta" by Alan Moore & David Lloyd; John Bolton interview.) **£1.00**

25 (68 pages, "Big Ben", "V for Vendetta"; "Ektryn" by Steve Moore & Cam Kennedy; "Pressbutton", "Bogey"; "Shandor" etc) **£1.25**

26 (final issue; "Zirk" by Leach; "V for Vendetta"; "Big Ben"; "The Liberators" by Grant Morrison & John Ridgway; "Bogey", etc) **£1.25**

»**MARVELMAN SPECIAL** (1984; 1950s Marvelman reprints + Alan Moore & Alan Davis framing sequence, story ties in with **Warrior** issue 11; "Big Ben" by Ian Gibson) **£1.00**

1 ("Dracula" by Skinn & Neary, "Kronos" by S Moore & Ian Gibson + Angus McKie strip) **£1.50**

2 (very rare, "Curse of Frankenstein" by Cuyas, "Kronos" by Gibson + Brian Lewis strip & cover) **£5.00**

3 (very rare, "Frankenstein Pt 2" by Cuyas; Ian Gibson & Trev Goring comic strips) **£5.50**

4 (very rare, "Seven Golden Vampires" by Brian Lewis + John Bolton's first comics strip) **£9.50**

5 (very rare, "Moon Zero Two" by Paul Neary + Martin (Garth) Asbury comic strip, Lewis cover) **£8.50**

6 (very rare, "Dracula, Prince of Darkness" by Donne Avenell and John Bolton + Brian Lewis strip & cover art) **£12.00**

7 ("Twins of Evil" by Blas Gallego + Dave Gibbons strip) **£1.50**

8 (intro "Shandor" by S Moore & J Bolton + "Quatermass Xperiment by Brian Lewis, and Joe Colquhoun strip) **£1.50**

9 ("Quatermass" Part 2 by Lewis + Jim Baikie strip) **£1.50**

10 ("Curse of the Werewolf" strip by S Moore & J Bolton) **£1.50**

11 ("The Gorgon" by Trev Goring & Cuyas + Brian Lewis strip) **£1.50**

12 ("Gorgon" conclusion by Cuyas, Steve Parkhousse strip) **£1.50**

13 ("Plague of the Zombies" by Brian Bolland & Trev Goring + Brian Lewis strip and cover art) **£1.50**

14 ("One Million Years BC" strip by John Bolton) **£1.50**

15 ("The Mummy's Shroud" strip by David Jackson + Dave Gibbons) **£1.50**

16 ("Shandor" by Steve Moore & John Bolton, Patrick Wright strip) **£1.50**

17 ("Vampire Circus" by Brian Bolland, Goudenzi strip) Rare issue **£2.25**

18 (Rare issue, "Dracula, Frankenstein & The Werewolf" strip by Neal Adams & Dick Giordano, plus Pino strip) **£3.50**

19 ("The Reptile" by Brian Lewis + Steve Parkhouse strip) **£1.50**

20 ("Captain Kronos" by Steve Parkhouse) **£1.00**

21 ("Shandor" by Moore & Bolton + Berni Wrightson strip) **£1.50**

22 ("The Mummy" by David Jackson + Goudenzi strip) **£1.00**

23 ("Quatermass 2" by David Lloyd + Dave Gibbons strip) **£1.00**

24 (Brian Lewis special, reprinting best of above strips) **£1.00**

25 ("The Monster Club" by Skinn & Bolton + slick 2-page pullout colour Bolton poster, Garry Leach cover) **£2.50**

26 ("Monster Club" conclusion by Skinn, Bolton & Lloyd) **£1.00**

27 ("Brides of Dracula" by Steve Moore & John Stokes, Austin cvr) **£1.00**

28 ("Brides of Dracula" conclusion by Moore & Stokes) **£1.00**

29 ("Night Holds Terror" by Vahimagi & Lewis) **£1.00**

30 (Final issue, no strips, Videofantasy listing instead, that's progress for you!) **£1.00**

»**DRACULA SPECIAL** (1984; "Dracula" by Skinn & Neary; "Dracula, Prince of Darkness" by John Bolton + Bolton sketchbook) **£1.00**

»**SINBAD & THE EYE OF THE TIGER** (32 page magazine featuring comic strip adaptation of movie by Skinn & Ian Gibson, 1976) **£1.50**

»**STARBURST** *1* (Jeff Hawke by Sydney Jordan, Dave Gibbons strip, Brian Lewis strip, Harry Harrison short story + film features) **£1.50**
2 (Jeff Hawke conclusion, Ray Bradbury, Prinsoner, Wizards) **£1.50**
3 (Harrison Ford interview, Trek, Quark, CE3K, Logan's Run) **£1.25**
4 (rare, Marvel, Hulk in media, Tolkien, Excaliber, War/Wlds) **£2.50**
5 (Doug Trumbull interview, Dark Star, John Carpenter) **£1.99**
6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (rare) @ £3.00; *13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 - 20* **£2.50**
21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 - 40 **£2.00**
41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 @ £1.75; *54* **£1.00**

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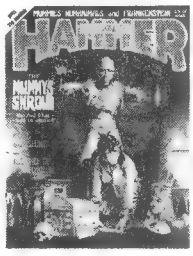
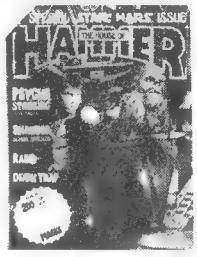
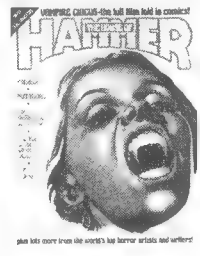
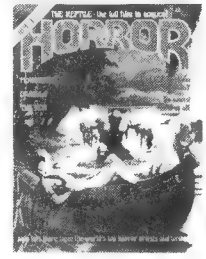
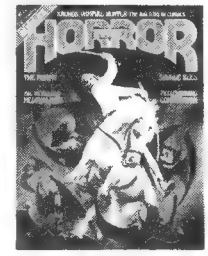










Marvel UK staff

IN ADDITION to the appointment of Vincent Conran as the new managing director of Marvel Comics (UK) Ltd (**C/Int 8**), two more senior appointments have recently been made.

Paul Neary, last seen inking Alan Davis's work on **Excalibur**, has been chosen for the position of editorial director, filling the role vacated by Jenny O'Connor who had been employed continuously by Marvel since 1980, when Neary was last there for a short term as editor-in-chief.

Michael Noye has been appointed director of finance and administration, coming over from Maxwell Business Communications where, as financial controller, he had been responsible for titles including **Media Week.**

James E. Galton, recently retired chirman of the Marvel Entertainment Group, said of the changes, "These appointments are the first in a series that will be necessary to take our company forward into the 1990s.

"We, like other publishers, review 1991 as a difficult year," he continued. "But we have made a corporate decision to invest heavily in the UK, in an effort to replicate in this country the success we have experienced in the United States."

Predator album from Titan

IN THE SHOPS this month is Titan Books' latest compilation, **Predator.**

Collecting the Dark Horse mini-series, this 168 page b&w graphic novel has a cover price of £6.95

Gifford lectures

COMICS AND MOVIE historian Denis Gifford will be giving two free lectures in London over the coming months.

Bonzo & Co (Thursday, April 25, 1.00 - 2.00) will be an illustrated lecture on British animated films during the silent era, and will include rare clips provided by the National Film Archive. An authority on the subject, Denis Gifford is author of **British Animated Films**, published in America by McFarland.

Comics At War (Thursday, May 9, 1.00 - 2.00) will look at the morale-boosting titles publishers issued in the early 1940s and will be accompanied by a selection of slides of rare war comics.

Both lectures will be held at The Museum of London, Barbican Centre, EC2.

LEM Shockwave

ALREADY on the stands is London Editions' replacement for their cancelled **Zones** and **DC Action** titles, **Shock Wave.**

Originally announced as **Shadows** (which created confusion and copyright problems) the new monthly is in a more traditional mold than the company's previous two titles.

With a 95p cover price and a 48 page full colour newsprint interior, **Shadows** is "pretty much what we wanted to do with **Zones** in the first place" according to editor of the UK **Superman** title, Martin Gray.

Comprised of direct sale DC material, **Shadows** contains Black Orchid, a continuation of Animal Man (from **DC Action**) and a 4-issue serialisation of the two Morrison/Lloyd issues of **Hellblazer.**

Also from London Editions this month is **Heroes**, a 50p weekly 24 page colour title, reprinting **Legion of Super-Heroes** ("Darkseid Saga") along with rotating Blue Devil, Firestorm, Alan Moore's Green Arrow and Batman team-ups from **The Brave & The Bold.**

Meanwhile, the company's newly acquired publishing of **MAD Magazine** sees a free Alfred E. Neuman badge with issue 347, March 21

Deadline's third year - new look from new head

WHILE LAST YEAR saw three major publishers fail in their attempts to produce successful 'adult' comics, one independently financed title continued to thrive.

Deadline has seen competitors come and go over its two years as a newsstand-distributed mass market title and, having survived the hardships of a recession, competition and general trade apathy and ignorance, is now poised to take on the Americans.

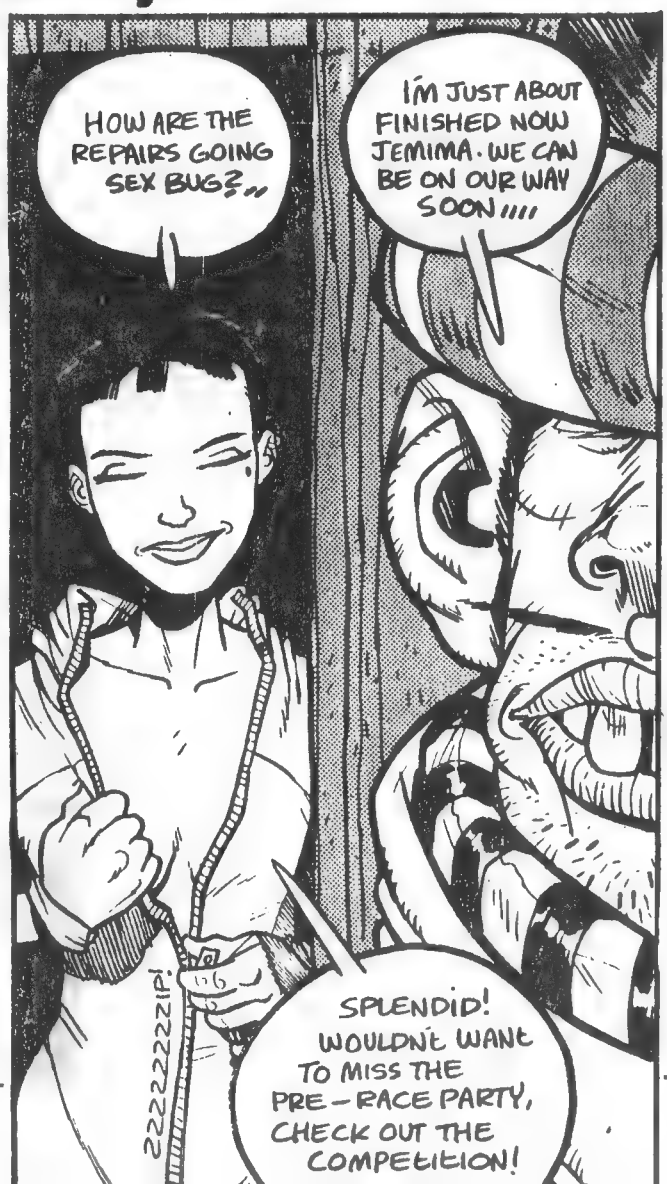
Under the guidance of Dark Horse Comics, America's largest independent publisher, **Deadline** material will be represented in the standard comicbook size colour format.

Tank Girl will be a 4-issue Dark Horse mini-series, representing the anarchic skinhead girl and her kangaroo boyfriend's adventures to the American public.

In Britain, the character has attained a massive cult status, loved by everyone from the punk in the street to the likes of The Ramones and Jonathon Ross, and has replaced the long-established Judge Dredd as the most popular UK comics character in several awards.

Following the release of **Tank Girl** in the States, Dark Horse will be releasing **Deadline USA**, a series of reprint collections from early issues of the British edition, repackaged in the American format, and introducing the rest of **Deadline's** creators and creations to US fans.

The UK edition, however, refuses to rest on its laurels. Following a temporary editorship under **A1's** Dave Elliott, the magazine has been totally redesigned with the coming of new editor Si Spencer.


HOW ARE THE REPAIRS GOING SEX BUG?..
I'M JUST ABOUT FINISHED NOW JEMIMA. WE CAN BE ON OUR WAY SOON!!!!
ZZZZZZZIP!
SPLENDID! WOULDN'T WANT TO MISS THE PRE-RACE PARTY, CHECK OUT THE COMPETITION!

Si's intention is to improve the continuity and cohesiveness of the strips, and re-vamp the magazine's unique approach to issues affecting its audience of young adults. With its coverage of the independent music scene and features on racism, sexism and global events, **Deadline's** content makes it more than just a comic or yet another youth culture magazine.

The April issue is set to include a free 16 page colour supplement featuring Philip Bond's "Wired World", a free Tank Girl poster and a competition to win the original poster art, plus Shaky Kane masks, a Planet Swerve board game and Fireball playing cards — a giveaway to accompany the new series from Tank Girl creator Jamie Hewlett.

The **Deadline** editorial team maintain the secret of their success where so many others have failed is due to the creative process starting from the bottom.

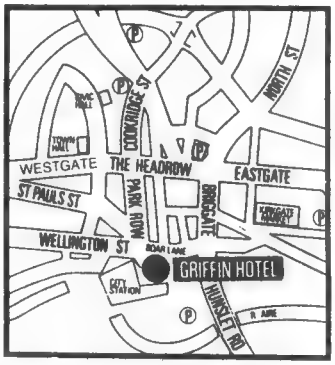
"This approach, of allowing the creators free rein at work, and hence to enjoy their work more, reflects in the content of the strips," they told **Comics International.**

"This approach is in stark contrast to the usual corporate thinking chain, which sadly invariably begins with the accounts department, leads down a chain of command, and the creator is usually the last to be consulted about his own work."

They concluded, "**Deadline's** strength lies in its independence and the big boys in innumerable accounts departments would do well to take note of it."

LEEDS COMIC MART

AT THE GRIFFIN HOTEL, BOAR LANE, LEEDS ON SATURDAY, MARCH 23rd, 1991



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Preview: Toxic weekly

Five contrasting styles are combined in the new Apocalypse comic **Toxic.**

They are (from top, clockwise): Simon Bisley, Mike McMahon, Kev O'Neill, Cam Kennedy and Martin Emond. Scripts are provided by Pat Mills, Alan Grant and John Wagner.

Will the top names from **2000AD** be able to repeat their 1970s success in the 1990s? With their combined experience, if anyone can, it's the **Toxic** team. Their combination of wit, outrageous humour, top class art and high production values coupled with a certain **Viz**like impact cover certainly challenges the more traditional fare from Fleetway.

Comic Cuts 1 found

THROUGH a combination of luck and foresight, a copy of world's first ever comic has resurfaced.

Comic Cuts issue one, dated May 17, 1890, is widely accepted as the world's first comic. Its runaway success made its 24 year old editor one of the major press barons of the twentieth century, and it led directly to the creation of both **The Daily Mail** and **The Daily Mirror.**

Now, almost 101 years later, a copy of the future Lord Northcliffe's first ever publication has surfaced.

In a small Hertfordshire hamlet (16 houses, a pub and a garage), an 87 year old widow was tidying up her papers, in preparation for moving to Kent.

Coming across a copy of an old tabloid comic, she turned to her son-in-law, a retired twon planner,and said how it would be a shame to throw the comic away, perhaps someone would enjoy having it.

Through the National Newspaper Library at Colindale, North London, **Comics International** was approached for advice.

The historical importance of **Comic Cuts** 1 is immense, not only did it give the world the word 'Comic' as a generic term for the entire medium, but it led to the launch of two of Britain's largest-selling dailies, and predated America's first comic (**The New York Journal Comic Supplement,** William Randolph Hearst, 1902) by twelve and a half years.

As a result of the difficulty of evaluation, it has been suggested that an auction should be held through **Comics International** on behalf of the owner.

AUCTION

COMIC CUTS 1 (17/5/1890) was an 8-page tabloid (380 x 290mm) black and white title.

Untrimmed, it opens out into a large (almost A1) sized sheet, with four pages to view per side. While the interior four pages are typeset jokes and whimsical anecdotes in a standard newspaper grid, the outer four pages are made up of comics, renging from single frame jokes to six frame sequential strips.

The copy to be auctioned has been folded over at some time, though the crease marks do not damage the newsprint, and would flatten under glass.

Imperfections in the paper have led to small age spots of browning (each less than 2mm) throughout.

The whiteness of the paper has diminished by no more than 5%, but the paper — a thick coarse newsprint — has not become brittle and remains totally flexible.

A slight chipping at the outer edges while stored affects 2 sides, but only within the outer 3mm,. leaving a 20mm clean surround to the copy area.

A spine tear extends 300mm into the one-sheet and a small (4mm diameter) hole is in the centre of the cover page, but not affecting either copy or visuals.

All described defects can be considered minor in the context of the condition of this copy, which could be described overall as good to very good condition, and has been well looked after in good levels of humidity.

It has rarely been handled, and once framed would show no visible defect outside of slight newsprint discolouration.

BIDDING

Bids can be made by telephoning 081-343 0400 between 10.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, but a written confirmation must be received within 7 days of telephone call.

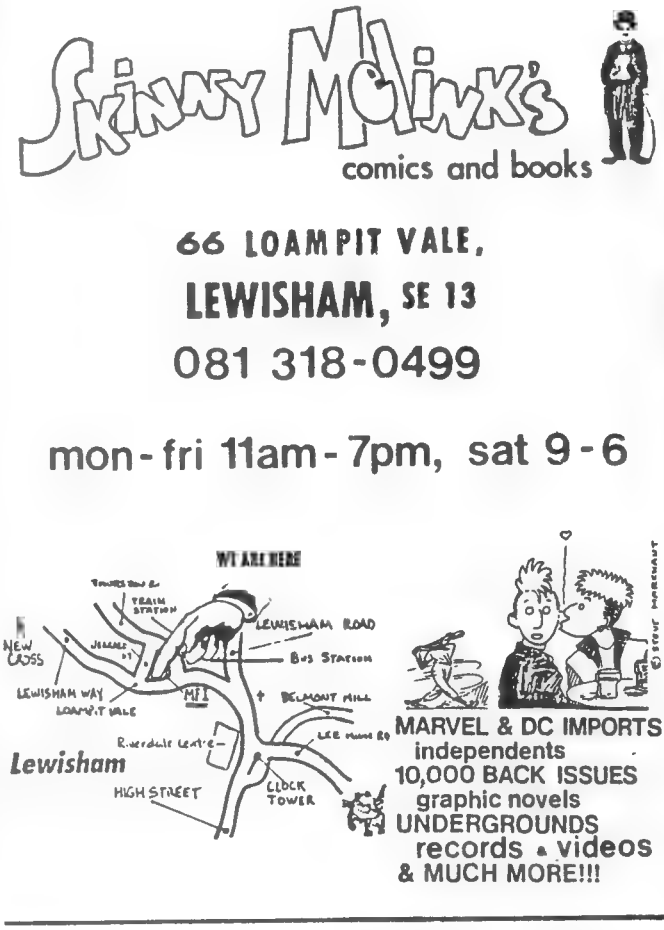
Bids, or confirmations of bids, should be addressed to:

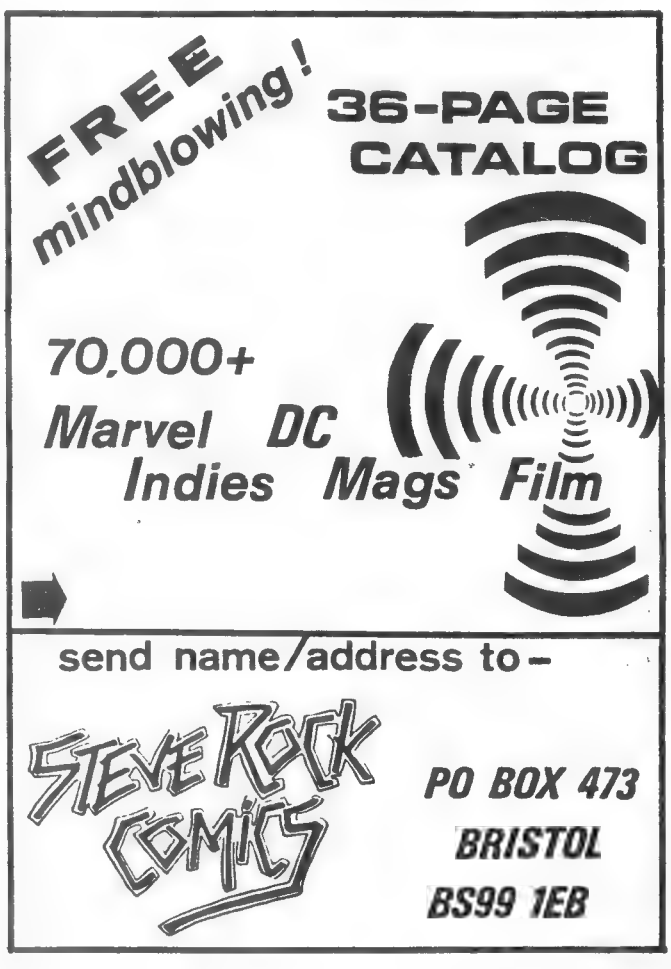
Comic Cuts 1
Comics International
77 Oxford Street
London W1R 1RB

Information concerning current bidding levels can also be obtained from the above telephone number.

Closing date for telephone bidding is Monday April 22, 5.00pm, Closing date by post is date stamped Monday April 29.

Details of the sale will be published in a future issue of **Comics International.**





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MEDIA FILE

Associate editor Sarah Bolesworth looks at recent media coverage of comics and related product

THE EXCITEMENT generated by the UK opening of the film **Akira** during the ICA's "Cyberpunk" season in London last month confirmed a continued rise in interest in adult comics culture.

The Institute for Contemporary Arts had "record-breaking showings during the first weekend", reported spokeswoman Melissa Laner. The following week saw box office takings in excess of £11,500, she added.

This was due in some part, no doubt, to a breathless interview by Tony Ryans with the creator and producer of **Akira**, Katsuhiro Otomo, published in **Time Out** (1065) with the cover-line "The Movie That Drove Japan Wild". You too can be driven wild by catching the film at your local art-house cinema during this month.

Meanwhile the big comics story in the US is that the **Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles** cartoon show is being trounced in the tv ratings by scourge of the American consumerist conscience, Turner Network TV's eco-super-hero **Captain Planet**, who wages war against pollutors. The cartoon series has been acquired by TVam to be shown in the UK from April '91 onwards.

TNT isn't the only US corporation to have discovered that using worthy causes to enhance their product's claims does sales no harm whatsoever... Take for example Marvel Comics' participation in the Presidential Anti-Illiteracy and Anti-Drugs Campaigns, latest innovations from the WhiteHouse publicity machine.

MARVEL COMICS' GIFT HORSE

Marvel suggest that, in order to support the campaigns, **Amazing Spider-Man 1** and **Captain America Goes to War Against Drugs** should be given away free to kids. But their concern doesn't extend to supplying the comics free of charge to the retailers - they have to pay for the publisher's munificent public gesture. Surely the retailer's only option is to **Just Say No?**

In terms of marketing schemes and stratagems, it's difficult to say who's promoting what when it comes to the recent symbiotic extravaganza from the Maxwell Consumer Publishing and Communications group. The 3.8 million circulation **Daily Mirror** gave away a free "Special Preview Issue" of the new **Disney Weekly** (23.2.'91), one of the line of Disney reprint product from Maxwell's Fleetway Publications, and the reprint newsstrip **Disney Mirror** comes free every Saturday with the paper from February 1991.

ZAPPED ON TV

But in the midst of the tv listings war, **What's On TV** obviously didn't have any doubt as to which way the cookie **Crumbles** when they started sales with a free comic, **Zap** (also the title of an English and American underground comic featuring Robert Crumb's early work during the '60s).

Their problem was that they didn't tell their press office anything about the comic, so when journalists made enquiries about its origins, the beleaguered employees were thrown into a state of confusion, and were forced to actually **look** at the thing...

No such confusion could be induced by the unmistakable appearance of '80s comics guru Alan Moore on Channel 4's **Heroes** (8.3.'91), introduced as the man who wrote "comics heroes like you've never seen them before" in the 3 million-selling **Watchmen**. By using comics to illustrate contemporary moods, this Antenne 2 joint production (hosted by BBC2's **Rapido's** Antoine de Caunes) pointed up the difference between European and British attitudes towards the comics medium most effectively.

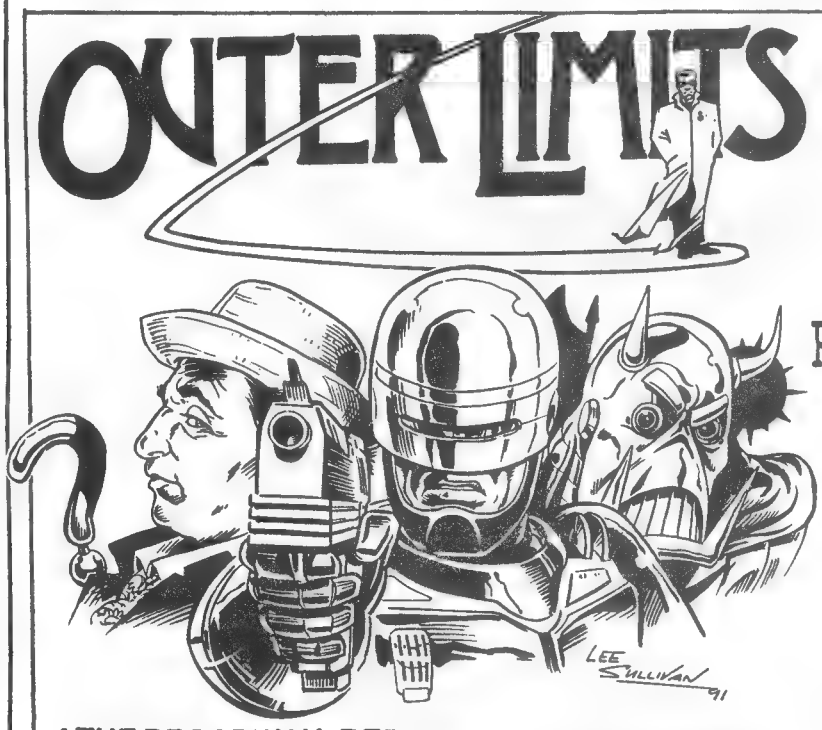
Produced in the homeland of Druillet, Bilal and Moebius, it was natural to get in a comics writer to dissect the '90s hero's status. But would a UK tv production company do the same?

SID THE SEXIST GETS NAILED

Comics are much more likely to be on tv in this country when they fit into the stereotyped preconception of what a comic **is**.

Thus it is that we hear from Jimmy (**Spender**) Nail on **The Jonathan Ross Show** (C4,4.3.'91) that there is to be another adaptation from the **Viz** stable - "Sid the Sexist" - to be transmitted on Channel 4 later this year. Or from D C Thomson that, coinciding with Dennis the Menace's 40th "Funniversary" another series of the **Dennis the Menace Show** has been commissioned for The Children's Channel.

It's either that, or the sort of thing Lenny Henry said in Dominic Wells' interview with him in **Time Out** (1069), talking about his appearance in the **Comic Relief Comic**: "I'm going to be the envy of every hippie, every bloody dead head that strolls into Forbidden Planet; every mohawked, noseearring dude from Meanwhile Comics is going to be so jealous of me because I'm in a bloody comic."Quite so.



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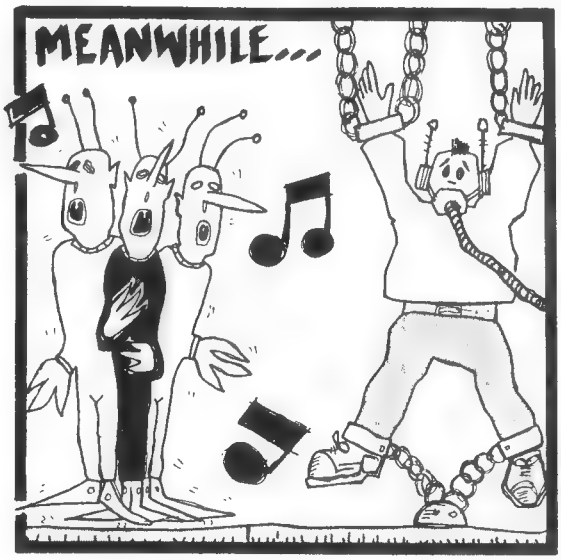

ERIC GETS KIDNAPPED BY STRANGE ALIENS, WHO THINK THEY'RE THE BEVERLEY SISTERS.

MEANWHILE...

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The Art of Comics

ADVANCE LISTINGS

READERS: You can use this Advance Listings section as an order form with your specialist retailer or mail order supplier. Simply tick between the < > markings which precede each title entry, preferably in red or blue pen or even highlight marker. Then detatch this centre pages section, fill in the form as shown and guarantee not missing any of the new titles coming out. Certain retailers may not accept advance orders, so check with them first. Using this system will help your supplier to supply you with the comics you need.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED

(Smith & Jones + Ward)	*= Writer & penciller + inker*	***B&W***	*= Black and white interiors*
HBK or PBK	*= Hardback or paperback*	***Squarebound***	*= No staples; book format*
32pgs	*= Quantity of interior pages*	***Baxter***	*= Heavy white interior paper*
Cover stock	*= Interior paper as covers*	***(Date)***	*= Shipping date*

All prices of US titles are dollar prices. Where dollar and stirling prices (ie. $1.00/50p) is stated, title will be distributed approximately 3 months after the slightly more expensive air freighted copies, which are sold in the UK simultaneously to USA.. Because of additional costs in air freight shipping, advance copies are sold at a price based on dollar value.

Shipping date is usually one week before copies arrive at your retailer/mail order supplier. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate, as provided by publishers. Late shipping and cancellations will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International.***

SHIPPING: APRIL 1991

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AARDVARK

< > CEREBUS THE AARDVARK 145 (Sim & Gerhart) b&w $2.25
< > CEREBUS: CHURCH AND STATE 5 (Sim) This issue reprints Cerebus 55, chapter 4 of "Church & State". b&w $2.00
< > CEREBUS: CHURCH AND STATE 62 (Sim) Reprint of Cerebus 56, chapter 5 of "Church and State". b&w $2.00

AC COMICS

< > FEMFORCE 36 (Levins + Black & Heike) "Under the Shadow of the Shroud" Part 3 (of 3) Shroud-possessed Shade and Dragonfly attack their own dwindling ranks of Femforce, while on Jungle Island disaster looms. b&w 52pg $2.95
< > ROY ROGERS WESTERN CLASSICS 4 Featuring current "King of the Cowboys" news, with part 2 of the "Twilight in the Sierras" novelisation, new RR merchandise and a 24-pg comic section with Roy,. Dale Evans and Trigger. Part-colour. 48pg $3.95
< > THRILLING PLANET TALES Reprint of selected Fiction House Planet Tales, including "Mars, God of War" (Joe Doolin), "Mysta of the Moon" (Matt Baker), "Space Rangers" (Lee Elias), "Star Pirate" (Maurice Whitman), "Life on other Worlds" (Murphy Anderson) and "The Lost World" (George Evans). Limited edition. Part-colour. 68pg $9.95

ADVENTURE

< > ALIEN NATION: THE SKIN TRADE 2 (of 4; Cunningham + Kirk & Pallot) Outsider Mason Jar is caught searching Dexter Methorophan's office, while a new drug spells doom for the city streets. b&w $2.50
< > APE NATION 3 (of 4; Marshall + Wyman & Pallot) Roto, Caan and Simon join forces to battle Gen. Ollo and the alien Danada while Heston finds Elysa and they make plans aboard the Tenctonese ship. $2.50
< > DEATHWORLD BOOK 2, 2 (of 4; Holland & Campos) Having escaped from Ch'aka, Jason is immediately captured by the religious fanatic Edipon - but their situations are reversed when Edipon's people find out about Jason's knowledge of technology - the steam engine. b&w $2.50
< > THE DEFENCELESS DEAD 3 (of 3; Spangler & Tidwell + Stiles) Concluding the mini-series with Gil seeking out the organlegger Anubis - a dealer in stolen body parts who, as Gil discovers, has a shocking history. b&w $2.50
< > JEREMIAH: BIRDS OF PREY 1 (of 2; Hermann) Post-apocalyptic story of survivors of third world war sees Americans returning to impoverished existence of early settlers. Jeremiah is the only villager left after his settlement is destroyed by raiders; he sets out to avenge his people and forms a band of criminals in the process. b&w $2.50
< >JEREMIAH: BIRDS OF PREY 2 (of 2; Hermann) Jeremiah is captured by band of slavers headed up by "Fat-eye Birmingham" Friend Kurdy tries to enthuse local people into rising against the slavers before Jeremiah's fed to Fat-eye's pets. b&w $2.50
< > MERLIN 5 (of 6;R A Jones & R Davis) Merlin and Hagus's friendship comes to an end when Merlin refuses to go into battle with Aurelius's army against the Carados - with fatal consequences for Hagus. b&w $2.50
< > PLANET OF THE APES 12 (Marshall & Wyman + Pallot) This issue features the first ever Ape wedding in "Bells" with Alexander and Coure marrying. b&w $2.50
< > PLANET OF THE APES: MONKEY PLANET (Marshall & Burles + Kaalbery) Reprint of first four issues of Planet of the Apes, a century after the time period of the film Battle for the Planet of the Apes. b&w $9.95
< > PLANET OF THE APES: URCHAK'S FOLLY 4 (of 4; Chaloner & Naylor) "The War!" finds Sebastian Thorne discovering how he came into the Valley, while Urchak's crazy plan risks the lives of the inhabitants. b&w $2.50
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< > SINBAD: THE HOUSE OF GOD 2 (of 4; R A Jones & Wyman + Parks) Sinbad meets a genie while looking for kidnapped Queen Aziza. He's offered a choice of deaths as a magic wish. b&w $2.50

AIRCEL

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< > CASANOVA 2 (Ricard) Casabiva lays a trap for the Count of Tiretta. Adult. b&w $2.50
< > CHASER PLATOON 1 (of 6; Eldred & Krueger) The Iron Infantry deal with the mysteries of their undefined mission while Saringer forces develop a new secret weapon. b&w $2.25
< > CLIMAXXX 1 (of 4;Barry Blair) Sexy super-heroine with "the equivalent intelligence of a pile of bricks". Adult. $3.50
< > DEADWALKERS 4 (of 4; Weppler & Grigni) Deathbringer holds pregnant Sheila captive while Gabriel's forced to kill the zombie Eric. Mature readers. b&w $2.50
< > DEBBIE DOES DALLAS (Harkins & Clark) Adult. b&w $2.50
< > DIRTY PICTURES 1 (of 3) The "naughty"art of the '30s pulps - all genres covered, with introduction by comics historian John Wooley. Adult. b&w $2.50
< > ELFLORD CHRONICLES 8 (Blair) 12-part series repr 1980 Canadian comic series. b&w $2.75
< > FIRE TEAM 3 (of 6; Don Lomax) Cam and the undead Fire Team stage a daring rescue in Vietnam when Hue is captured by the Viet Cong. b&w $2.50
< > LEATHER & LACE 20 (Barry Blair) Pam and Chris try to settle back into their New York lifestyle. Adult. b&w $2.50
< > THE POWER 2 (of 4; David Cooper) Super-girls discover secrets of their new powers while clone adversaries are being manufactured. b&w $2.25
< > RATED X-SPECIAL 1 (Watson Portello) Adult space fantasy. b&w 40pg $2.95
< > SPICY ADULT STORIES 2 More '30s reprint adult material. b&w $2.50
< > VAMPYRE'S KISS BK 1.SET (by Barry Blair) Collected set of 4 issues of Book 1. Adult. $10.00

APPLE

< > DEATH DREAMS OF DRACULA 2 (Shanklin & K Jones + E Thomas + Guanlao + Wrightson) Young Davey's all the more suggestible to Dracula with his avid consumption of comics, role-playing games and horror-movies, plus a nasty surprise in the cellar. b&w $2.50

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< > COMICS INTERVIEW 95 Featuring the coming sequel to the TMNT movie with the subtitle "The Secret of the Ooze". $3.95
< > COMICS INTERVIEW 96 Featuring a look at the new series to be published after the cancellation of New Mutants - which is, of course X-Force. The creative team (Fabian Nicieza and Rob Liefeld) interviewed about the product. $3.95
< > COMICS REVUE 60 & 61 Anthology of popular comic strips includes the new adventures of Spider-Man, Batman, Modesty Blaise, Flash Gordon, Gasoline Alley and TMNTs b&w 68pg $4.95

DARK HORSE

< > DARK HORSE PRESENTS 50 Return of Paul Guinan's "Heartbreakers". Dr Therese Sorenson and her clones await the looming battle with corporations who want to appropriate her cloning techniques. Plus "Harlequin" (Csutoras & Gaudiano) and a new SF story (George Perez). b&w $1.95
< > FLAMING CARROT COMICS 25 (Bob Burden) Starts 2-part cross-over with TMNTs, with Flaming Carrot and the Mysterymen rescuing Raphael from a brain-washing with ensuing city-wide crash course in super-heroing. b&w $2.00
< > OUTLANDERS 27 (Johji Tetsuya leads an all-out fight to rescue the kidnapped princess. b&w 40pg $2.50
< > PREDATOR: BIG GAME 2 (of 4; Arcudi & Dorkin + Gil) While investigating the site of a nuclear blast Corporal Enoch Nakai discovers the alien Predator's trail. 32pg $2.50
< > THE VENUS WARS 1 (Yoshikazu Yasuhiko) After a collision between Venus and space-ice the planet is habitable, and becomes the site for battles between rival colonies claiming resources. Venus' fate lies in the hands of suicidal biker Ken Falkirk. b&w $2.25

DC COMICS

RO = Ronalds Canadian printer,cartridge stock

SHIPPING MARCH 26TH

< > THE NAZZ 4 (of 4; T. Veitch & Talbot) With this concluding issue Captain Striker gets the superpowers he wants and Nazz survives the Retaliator's nuclear attack. But Michael Nazareth's girlfriend has the key to Nazz's destiny as she realises what he has become. Mature readers. RO Rescheduled 48pg $4.95

SHIPPING APRIL 9TH

< > ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY 17 (Kupperberg & Swan + DeMulder) Lex Luthor makes his challenge to Superboy when he gets hold of the Bureau For Extra-Normal Matters file on him. $1.25
< > CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN 4 (of 8; Loeb & Sale) The Challengers disperse into various parts of the world; Rocky in Cannes, Ryan fighting a revolution in Central America and Ace in a potentially futile search in the Amazon. RO $1.75
< >FLASH 51 (Messner-Loebs & LaRocque + Marzan) The Communist Party's hero Proletariat is unemployed as the political scenario unfolds in Eastern Europe, so he's in the US conspiring against the West with the Kapitalist Kouriers. It's Flash's task to stop him. $1.00
< > HAWKWORLD 12 (Ostrander & Nolan + Kwapisz) Shayera flies to save kidnapped Princess Treska from the Manhawks. RO $1.50

< >JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA 49 (Giffen & DeMatteis + Hughes + Beatty + Marzan) A night on the razz for G'nort, Kilowog and J'onn J'onzz inevitably leads to a fight with Black Hand; plus the return of Booster Gold. $1.00

< > JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY 3 (Giffen & G Jones + McKone + Smith) Mitch Wacky and Kilowog travel back in time to prevent the Extremists from existing. When the others try to follow them they arrive to find themselves only 6 inches tall; when they all try to return they turn up in the JLA's time period. 80pg $2.95

< >LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES 19 (T Bierbaum & Giffen + Gordon) Explosion of the Moon causes a tide of world destruction on Earth, which the Legion is powerless to stop it; while in ancient Egypt Jo Nah finds love and Nabu - the original Dr Fate. Continued from the pages of Adventures of Superman 478. RO $1.75

< > SGT ROCK SPECIAL 13 (Kanigher & Andru + Esposito) Featuring the bad luck gang of WWII, the Suicide Squad, plus another Sgt Rock and Easy Co adventure (Kanigher & Kubert) 48pg $2.00

< > SUPERMAN ANNUAL 3 (Jurgens & Abell + ?) Armageddon: 2001 tie-in. While Waverider is searching for the hero who will become the arch-villain in 2030 he looks into Superman's possible futures, one of which sees Metropolis nuked and the Man of Steel married to Lana Lang. Debut of new artist Dusty Abell. 64pg $2.00

< > TWILIGHT 2 (of 3;Chaykin & Garcia-Lopez) Karel Sorenson has given everyone immortality and established a religion that preaches peace between all worlds. Tommy Tomorrow sets himself up to challenge her divine rule. Mature readers. Rescheduled. RO 48pg $4.95

< > WONDER WOMAN 55 (Perez & Thompson + Tanghal) WW faces a new adversary in the form of Dr Psycho. $1.00

SHIPPING APRIL 16TH

< > BATMAN ANNUAL 15 (Grant & Fern) Armageddon: 2001 Tie-in. It's 2001 and the Joker is a big talk-show host while Batman is sentenced to death for the murder of the Penguin. Senator Tim Drake is Robin, trying to free the Dark Knight. Guest - starring Catwoman for Anarky. 64pg $2.00

< > BATMAN 463 (Grant & Breyfogle + Mitchell) Batman leaves San Francisco for Death Valley where he meets a "Native American" with a huge canine companion of which he's suspicious. $1.00

< > DRAGONLANCE 31 (Blaustein & Randall + Elliot) Dwarf War: Part 2 (of 3). 16-year-old girl Riva fights Uurthrym, leader of the mountain dwarves. RO $1.75

< > DEMON 12 (Grant & Semeiks & Rodier) Etrigan and Lobo in a no-holds-barred slugfest, plus more about Klarion the Witchboy. RO $1.50

< > FORGOTTEN REALMS COMICS 22 (Grubb & Morales + Spofford + Truog + Simons) Ishi, Qmen and Vartan are trapped by the Akri, while Foxy is on the run and Agrivar is in trouble. Someone's got to come to the rescue. RO $1.75

< > GREEN ARROW 47 (Grell & Cowan + Nyberg) During Oliver's war with the trappers he discovers the true world of poaching in the African bush. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > GREEN LANTERN 13 (G Jones & Staton + Broderick + Bright + Patterson & Tanghal) Three chapters produced by different art teams introducing three members of the new Green Lantern Corps who join John Stewart in the restoration of the Central Power Battery. 48pg $1.75

< > HAWK & DOVE 25 (B. Kesel & Guler + Hanna) Double issue recaps initial 2 years (art by Maguire and Grindberg, etc.) Meanwhile Hank Hall's desperate desire to bring his brother back overcomes his determination to be an upright citizen. 48pg $2.00

< > HELLBLAZER 42 (Ennis & W Simpson + Pennington) During his search for a cure for his terminal illness, Constantine visits an old friend in Ireland who's guarding a secret. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA 3 (of 8; Strazewski & Parobeck + Burchett) Vengeance from the Stars: Part 3. Green Lantern finds himself in conflict with Sagittarius the Archer who's determined to absorb all the broadcast energy in Gotham, while Solomon Grundy and Black Canary visit the criminal behind the plot. $1.00

< > MR MIRACLE 28 (Moench + Phillips & Dvorak) Final issue of the series sees Scott Free questioning his true identity - and having to make a crucial choice between remaining on Earth as MM or returning to take his place among the New Gods, while Barda's mother wants her to go back to Apokolips. $1.25

< > NEW TITANS 77 (Wolfman & Grummet + Vey) The "Titans Hunt" goes to Russian where it meets the new Red Star and a rebuilt comrade. RO $1.75

< > STAR TREK 20 (Weinstein & Purcell + Starr) When returning the Federation representative to his home world Kirk finds it on the brink of internecine war, and intervenes to prevent it. RO $1.50

< > STAR TREK: THE MIRROR UNIVERSE (Barr & Sutton + Villagran) Star Trek's 25th anniversary celebrations marked with this trade paperback reprint of a saga from Star Trek Vol 1 # 9 - 16 (1984-5). In an alternative universe, the enterprise's crew cross over into Federation space and create chaos. The real Kirk, Spock and co. are faced with the task of countering their doppelgangers' acts. Introduction by Star Trek novelist A C Crispin. RO 192pg $19.95

< > SUPERMAN 56 (Hudnall & Hannigan + Blyberg) The Red Glass Trilogy: Part 1 (of 3) The world's gone mad and Superman's got to find out who is responsible. Plus Kesel's back-up story, "Newspaper Legion". $1.00

SHIPPING APRIL 23RD

< > ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN 479 (Hudnall & Hannigan + Blyberg) The Red Glass Trilogy: Part 2 (of 3) Metropolis is a disaster-area, and Superman's powerless; with Booster Gold, Martian Manhunter and Guy Gardner. $1.00

< > ANGEL & THE APE 4 (of 4; Foglio & Wilson) "The Apes of Wrath" Part 4 (of 4) Sam and Angle are joined in battle against Gorilla Grodd by the Inferior Five. $1.00

< > ANIMAL MAN 36 (Veitch & Dillon) Buddy and Cliff's relationship is showing cracks as Maxine's behaviour continues to be odd, and Travis meets "Mr Rainbow". RO $1.50

< > DOOM PATROL 45 (Morrison & McCarthy) Cover artist McCarthy's first interior work for DC in the continuing post-modern saga. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > GREEN ARROW ANNUAL 4 (Ryan & Grell + Pensa) Ollie and Dinah travel back in time to Robin and Marion's era, where they help to save Sherwood from the poisoning planned by a crypto-eco-villain. Mature readers. RO 64pg $2.95

< > L.E.G.I.O.N. '90 28 (Grant & Giffen & Pratt) Stealth gives birth. RO $1.50

< > LOONEY TUNES MAGAZINE Featuring Bugs & co. in "Fun in your Future" plus "Rocket Rabbit" and a L T guide to the galaxy. RO 32pg $1.95

< > MISTER E 2 (of 4; Jeter & Snyder + Geldhof) Searching for the mystery woman who's dominated his life Mister E encounters a wolf-being and a sorcerer who's central to his past. Mature readers. RO $1.75

< > THE RING (Thomas & Kane) Popular 1990 series collected in trade paperback - all four of Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung Cycle, running the gamut of passionate emotions. Mature readers. RO 200pg $19.95

< > SANDMAN 27 (Gaiman & K Jones) Last chapter in the "Seasons of the Mists" story, with Sandman discusses the destiny of Hell with other players - the Lords of Order and Chaos, Angels of Heaven, Norse and Eyyptian gods. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN 12 (Milligan & Bachalo + Pennington) Shade in life-endangering battle with Troy Grenzer - who's body he lives in. Mature readers. RO £1.50

< > SPELLJAMMER COMICS 10 (Kraar & Quesada + Panosian) A space-faring Spanish galleon crash-lands in Krynn in the Dragonlance world. Riva Silvercrown saves the ship's captain, who then tells him an epic tale of his encounter with Spelljammer's captain, Meredith (a 14-page prose section). RO $1.75

< > STARMAN 35 (Giffen & David + Hoover + Hanna) Starman joins in a secret experiment with Kitty Faulkner, the results of which an international crime cartel tries to steal, leaving Starman in danger. $1.00

< > STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION 20 (Friedman & Krause + Marcos) First of 5-part epic in which Riker, Worf and Wesley's shuttle get lost and Enterprise has to face operating without its full crew. RO $1.50

< > SWAMP THING 108 (Wheeler & Hoffman) The Quest for the Elementals: Part 5 (of 6) Matango forces lay siege to the Parliament of Trees in order to destroy Tefe, while the menace of the Grey spreads across the world. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > WHO'S WHO 10 (of 16; various) Loose-leaf DC encyclopaedia with "Robin" (Lyle), "Crimson Fox" (Sears), "Vixen" (Maguire), "The Flash (Allen). RO 48pg $4.95

SHIPPING APRIL 30TH

< > ACTION COMICS [illegible] (Hudnall & Hannigan + Blyberg) The Red Glass Trilogy: Part 3 (of 3) Superman standing alone against all humanity - overwhelmed by madness. $1/50p

< > ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COMICS 30 (Mishkin & Duursema + Magyar) Carril's murderer is exposed, but it may be too late for Kyriani and the city. RO $1.75

< > BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT 19 (O'Neil & Von Eeden + Braun + Garcia-Lopez) Venom: Part 4 (of 5) While Batman follows Dr Porter to an island, Alfred battles monsters and a watery death-trap. If Batman takes the one chance to save Alfred he must ingest the strength-giving drug again, and, in doing so, become Porter's slave. RO $1.75

< > CAPTAIN ATOM 54 (Ostrander & Adams + Tanghal) Phantom Stranger sends Atom to Africa; he's then attacked by Shadowstorm. Things get strange when he blasts himself into the Quantum Field. Guesting Rasputin and Shadowstorm from Firestorm. $1.00

< > DETECTIVE COMICS 630 (Milligan & Aparo + DeCarlo) Batman in a quandary; he's got to bring in the mob hitman Stiletto, but the latter is a "man of honour" who's got in the way of corrupt FBI agents out to kill. $1.00

< > DOCTOR FATE 29 (Messner-Loebs & Giarrano + Gross) Kent Nelson's new job lands him in trouble while Doctor Fate cleans up the area. RO $1.50

< > GREEN ARROW 47 (Grell & Cowan + Nyberg) Showdown in Africa as the poachers are trapped by Green Arrow whilst killing endangered species, while in Seattle Dinah prepares for an unlikely date. Mature readers. RO $1.50

< > GREEN LANTERN: EMERALD DAWN II 3 (Giffen & G.Jones + Bright + Tanghal) 90 Days: Part 3 (of 6) Before prisoner Hal Jordan can investigate another murder he's taken to Korugar - Sinestro's home, where the evil inhabiting his tutor reveals itself further. $1.00

< > JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE 27 (Giffen & G Jones + Sears + Elliot) On returning to their London hq the JLE find their friends possessed by the alien force. Internecine war breaks out and they have to call in the JLA - who immediately come under threat themselves. $1.00

< > NEW GODS 27 (Part 1 of 2; Evanier & Hoberg + Blyberg) The New Gods launch their battle with Darkseid with an assault on the planet Apokolips. RO $1.50

< > SUICIDE SQUAD 54 (Ostrander & Yale + Isherwood) The Dragons's Horde: Part 2 (of 4). When the squad take up their positions in the Far East they find themselves up against the Kmer Rouge, the Red Shadows and the Yakuza. Katana from the Outsiders joins them, but then a blow contacts with the heart of the Squad - Amanda Waller. $1.00

SHIPPING MAY 7TH

< > KID ETERNITY 3 (of 3; Morrison & Fegredo) True origin of the Kid is revealed as he launches his attack on the forces of Order and the strange fate of Jerry Sullivan unfolds. Mature readers. RO 48pg $4.95

< > OMAC 1 (of 4; John Byrne) Jack Kirby's One man Army Corps (OMAC) returns in a barren future with Brother Eye, Jack's orbiting computer/mentor joining him in his battle against Mr Big who's travelled into the past in order to change the future. Jack's transferred into '30s America, separated from Brother Eye, and struggles to get back to his own time. Mature readers. RO b&w $4.95

< > STAR TREK ANNUAL 2 (David & Fry + Starr) The story that "Hollywood didn't dare tell" - Kirk's first year at Starfleet Academy; his meeting with mentors Matt Decker and Ben Finney, his first love affair with Carol Marcus and first humiliation with joker Finnegan. RO 64pg $2.95

< > WORLD WITHOUT END 6 (of 6; Delano & Higgins) Brother Bones and Rumour have to bury the hatchet if humanity is going to survive. Mature readers. RO $2.50

ECLIPSE

< > APPLESEED BOOK FOUR 4 (of 4; Masamune Shirow) ESWAT rivals Pani and Deunan battle while the rest of the crew's search for terrorists from Murma continues, while talks between the super-powers falter. b&w $3.50

< > DRAGONFLIGHT BOOK 2 (of 3; Stephens & Dowling + Von Tobel) Anne McCaffery's Dragonflight continues as Lessa bonds with Ramoth - spawn of the queen dragon to face the potentially terminal threadfall. 48pg $4.95

< > I AM LEGEND 2 (of 3; Steve Niles & E. Brown) Adpt of Richard Matheson's classic account of one man against an army of vampires - in which Neville tries to uncover the mystery of the plague and why he hasn't been affected. b&w 64pg $5.95

< > M BOOK 4 (of 4; Adapted by Jon J Muth) Kangaroo court for the kindermorder when he's trapped by vengeful criminals and put on trial. Meanwhile police chief Lohmann happens on information which could lead him to the criminals in the nick of time. 48pg $4.95

< > SCOUT: THE FOUR MONSTERS (Truman & Yates) Reprint of Scout #1-7 Story of the struggle to destroy the "Four Monsters" of Indian legend. Hard and softcover limited editions. 144pg $14.95/$34.95

< > SCOUT: MOUNT FIRE (Truman) Reprint of Scout #8-14 In which it transpires that there is another monster to vanquish, and introduces Beau La Duke. Hard and softcover limited editions. 144pg $14.95/$34.95

< > THE SPIDER 1 (of 3; Truman & Alcatena + Parsons) Book 1; Blood Dance. Hawkworld's creators TTuman & Alcatena update the '30s pulp vigilante, whose prime adversary in this story is female villain Captain Kidd. Her speciality is killing train passengers with an electrical device in order to rob them. Also implicated is corrupt politician Jet Skarno...48pg $4.95

< > STEED AND MRS PEEL 3 (of 3; Morrison & Caulfield + Gibson) Steed plays potentially fatal game of "Hangman" with dangerous Hilary Fox, with the destruction of London through nuclear holocaust in the balance, and the cost of losing the game Tara's neck in the noose. Plus conclusion of "Deadly Rainbow" and the solution of the Leopard People mystery by Emma. 48pg $4.95

< > TALES OF THE BEANWORLD (Marder) "Why Me" tells the story of Professor Garbanzo's regretful experiment with spears during which she traps herself in her own workshop, which leaves her with plenty of time to meditate upon her role as the Beanworld's toolmaker and inventor. Secrets of her origins and the relationship between her "hat" and the workshop are revealed. b&w $2.00

EROS COMICS

< > ATOMIC AGE TRUCKSTOP WAITRESS 1 (Fingerman) "The Adventures of Bunny Jo" Adult. Part-colour. 24pg $2.25

< > CANDIDE REVEALED! 2 (Yaco & DeBeaver) From the creator of Monster Comics' Metacops a pastiche of Voltaire's story of sexy adventure. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

< > CANNON 5 (of 8; Wally Wood) "Stateside Sleaze" tells story of battle between rednecks and hoods with Weasle and Cannon caught in the middle. Adult. b&w 40pg $2.95

< > IRONWOOD 4 (Bill Willingham) Dragavon and Pandora meet up with Fantasia who has been hired to kill them and get the Lazarus Knife. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

< > LIZ AND BETH 4 (of 4; G Levis) Final issue of "Eurotica". Adult . b&w 24pg $2.25

< > LOVE BITES 1 (Sullivan & Vokes) Bi-sexual aristos meet Count Dracula in bloodlust extravagnaza. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

< > RON WILBUR'S PULP DREAMS Collection of nearly nude girls in space, jungle adventurers, '30s crime-fighters in the tradition of classic pulps. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

< > SPANK 1 (Scott Campbell) Female heroine plays Dr Frankenstein with a male doll and "gets more than she bargained for " when the doll

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< > YOUNG WITCHES 2 (Barreiro & Lopez) History of Cult of Ishtar with erotic overtones. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

< > WOMEN ON TOP 1 Collection of Alazar illustrations with S+M theme. Adult. b&w 24pg $2.25

ETERNITY

< > CAT CLAW 7 (Kerac) Three stories: "Cat-Break Ridge", "Play Meow For Me" and "CatForcer" and the introduction of new Cat Claw villainess, Extremity. Adult. b&w £2.50

< > INVADERS FROM MARS (Graphic novel; S Jones & Carruthers) Adaptation of William Cameron Menzies' SF classic, when aliens invade only 10-year-old Josh Acri knows. He enlists the aid of the US army to halt the Martian's influence. Photo cover. b&w $9.95

< > LENSMAN: GALACTIC PATROL (Eldred) Reprint of mini-series #1-5 in which Dragoon's crew face multiple dangers when they crash-land on a Boskone-controlled world. b&w $12.95

< > LENSMAN: WAR OF THE GALAXIES 7 (of 7; Eldred and Kruger) When Kim and Buzz investigate the source of a drug to which people all over the galaxy are becoming addicted they find Boskone robots at work. b&w $2.25

< > NINJA HIGH SCHOOL 25 (Dunn) Featuring the return of the Zetramen. b&w $2.25

< > NINJA HIGH SCHOOL: THE PROM FORMULA 1 (of 2; Dunn) Zardon princess Leeana returns to Quagmire with a formula to transform the inhabitants into babies. Full-colour. $2.95

< > PENTACLE: THE SIGN OF THE FIVE 3 (of 4; Cunningham & Ross) When he merges with an amulet Dectective Sandler becomes the new Warlock; while Arianne trains her three Warlocks up. b&w $2.50

< > ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS: CYBERPIRATES 2 (of 4; Spangler & Tenney + deMioche) Looking for help Terry Weston enlists a computer pirate, only to find himself imprisoned for the information he recieves. Rolf Emerson is the crucial player in his release. b&w $2.25

< > SCIMIDAR BOOK 5: LIVING COLOUR 1 (of 4; Jones & Davis) Mysterious Shadrak invites Scimidar and Gitano to Brownsville to meet an actor. Choice of covers. Adult. b&w $2.50

< > SCIMIDAR BOOK 3: THE TWILIGHT MEN (Jones & Davis) Trade paperback. Scimidar and Gitano with divided loyalties in gang war. Adult. b&w $9.95

< > TERROR TALES 1 Anthology of new material: "Illusions & Delusions" (John Ross), "Hell on the Half Pipe" (Roy Burdine), "Operation Operator" (Ted Couldron) and "Victuals" (Terry Pallot). b&w $2.50

< > TROUBLE WITH GIRLS 23 (Jacobs & G Jones + Hamilton + Mann) Maxi Scoops and Lester finally get serious after being pursued by a bunch of psychotic Reaganites. Plus Les's dad makes an appearance. b&w $2.25

FANTACO

< > NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: PRELUDE 1 (Kastro) Preamble to the new regular series, with painted covers and interior artwork by new artist Carlos Kastro, containing material not to be reprinted. b&w $1.50

FANTAGOR

< > IN THE DARK 2 Horror anthology including "Blood Bath" (Rich Margopoulos and Richard Corben) plus material by Bruce Jones, Brian Buniak and others. b&w $2.00

FANTAGRAPHICS

< > ADVENTURES OF PROFESSOR THINWHISTLE and his Incredible Incredible Aether Flyer (Lupoff & Stiles) SF author and co-artist Xenozoic Tales on comedy epic spoof in the H G Wells or Jules Verne school, with the professor voyaging to the Moon with bizarre adventures to follow. Intro by Neil Gaiman in "Victorian" style. Mature readers. b&w 64pg $8.95

< > AMAZING HEROES 190 Featuring interview with Adam Hughes (Maze Agency, Justice League Europe), with information about Marvel's new Wonder Man series (Gerard Jones & Johnson + Austin) plus news, reviews, etc. b&w 88pg $3.50

< > AMAZING HEROES SWIMSUIT ISSUE 2 Offerings from Reed Waller, Paul Chadwick, Marc Hempel, Ty Templeton and Mitch O'Connell with a cover by Bill Willingham. b&w 120pg $6.95

< > COMICS JOURNAL 142 Interviews with cartoonists Arnold Roth (Playboy's "History of Sex") and Carol Tyler ("Work Abuse" series) Plus news, reviews and commentary. Rescheduled. b&w 120pg $3.95

< > I BEFORE E 1 (of 2) Reprint of early work of Sam (Epicurus the Sage, Aliens: Earth War) Kieth, with work from Critters - an animal detective story. Mature readers. Rescheduled. b&w 52pg $3.95

< > LOVE & ROCKETS 7 (2nd printing; Los Bros Hernandez) Reprint of #7. Mature readers. b&w 36pg $2.50

< > PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 12: THE NEW WORLD (Foster) Following the valiant prince's adventures in the New World. 52pg $16.95

< > UNSUPERVISED EXISTENCE 5 (LaBan) Bob travels to the heart of Turkey and discovers all the usual things about such journeys, while Annadette's lesbian folk band Fern experience fame. Mature readers. b&w 28pg $2.25

< > USAGI YOJIMBO BOOK 4 (Sakai) Softcover reprint with "The Dragon Bellow Conspiracy" from Usagi Yojimbo #13-18. Intro by filmaker Jodorowsky. b&w 184pg $14.95

< > YAHOO 5 (Sacco) "Anthropological" study of young women living in urban '90s. b&w 28pg $2.25

FIRST COMICS

< > LONE WOLF & CUB 45 (Koike & Kojima) Mature readers. b&w 64pg $3.25

< > BLUE WITCH OF OZ (Shanover) In the land of Oz, Dorothy and the Scarecrow go to the Great Grey Gillikin Swamp to discover the whereabouts of the Blue Witch. 48pg $8.95

< > CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED 26: AESOP'S FABLES (Adaptation: Eric Vincent) Selection of Aesop's Fables, with classic moral tales illustrated by animal characters. 48pg $3.95

< > CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED 27: THE JUNGLE (Upton Sinclair; adapted and illustrated by Peter Kuper. 48pg $3.95

FLEETWAY/QUALITY

< > JUDGE DREDD 54 $1.75

< > THE LAW OF DREDD (Wagner & Ezquerra) Dredd and dread Judges steam into East-Sov with a dose of atomic terror in continuing Apocalypse War. $1.75

< > LONER 5 (of 7) Karver Mondeega's looking for Loner who's reverted to his former job as a bounty-hunter. b&w $1.95

< > M.A.C.H. 1, #2 Latterday 007, fighting for Queen and country. b&w $1.95

< > NEMESIS THE WARLOCK 18 (Mills & Hicklenton) Torquemada's plan to unleash xenophobia is scotched when the psychopathic alien "Nemesis" can't live up to the real thing. b&w $1.95

< > THE VCS 1 The Vacuum Cleaners are the guys to suck up any trouble you might have in your space sector. b&w $1.95

GENESIS WEST

< > LAST OF THE VIKING HEROES SUMMER SPECIAL 3 (Thibodeaux) Whilst trying to prevent a scientist intent on changing the past in order to negate the Turtle's existence, the TMNTs meet with the Viking Heroes. $2.50

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< > RICHIE RICH BIG BUCKS 3 Reprint of selected stories. Rescheduled. $1.00

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< > WENDY 3 Reprint of selected stories. Rescheduled. $1.00

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KIDS ON THE BLOCK 4 (DeCesare & Colon) "The Curse of the Bibbleberry Diamond". $1.25

HERO COMICS

< > FLARE 5 (Mallonee & Hoberg) 21st-century hero Eternity Smith returns to fight alongside Flare. Plus solo story for the "Black Enchantress" and origins of Flare's mother. Mature readers. 52pg $3.50

< > FLARE FIRST EDITION 2 (Mallonee & Simpson) Reprint of first appearance of Flare in Champions mini-series plus new story explaining how she became separated from her siblings in the jungle. Mature readers. 52pg $3.50

< > ETERNITY SMITH/INDIGO TWO-PACK Reprint of Eternity Smith 8 and 9 featuring the origin of Indigo in preparation for the return of the character in future issues of Flare.

INNOVATION

< > CHILD'S PLAY: THE SERIES 4 (Mangels & Robertson + Oeming) Chucky gets locked in a toystore for the night and dreams that all the toys come to life to pursue him. Mature readers. $2.50

< > HERO ALLIANCE 17 (Campiti & Pearson) Victor takes new heroine Misty under his wing not realising the truth about her. Mature readers. $1.95

< > HERO ALLIANCE QUARTERLY 1 New quarterly series featuring two new stories per issue, focusing on one or more characters from Hero Alliance. Stories published here: "As I was going to St Ives" and "Past Perfect". Mature readers. $2.75

< > LOST IN SPACE 1 (of 12; Mumy & Campiti and G Broderick & M Thompson + Newell) Jupiter II has been Lost in Space for six years, Dr Smith is evil once more and the ship has been overhauled with alien technology. Will and Penny, now teenagers, are finding life more than difficult. Their first adventure "The Seduction of the Innocent" (written by Bill Mumy who played Will Robinson in the telly series and was co-creator of Comet Man) is a rework of the story concept - not in the camp vein of the broadcast series. $2.50

< > SENTRY SPECIAL 1 (Ingersoll & Naifeh + Rockwell) Popular Hero Alliance character Sentry in one-shot special, in which he battles Sepulcher who's on a killing bonanza. Cover by Hero Alliance artist Bart Sears. Mature readers. $2.75

< > SLAUGHTERTOWN USA 1 (Tyree & Szramski + Kleinbergen) One-shot continuation of "Scaramouch" set in quiet little town where all the inhabitants are murdered in a different way by an ancient demon, "Slaughterhouse", whose victims come back as zombies. Mature readers. b&w $2.25

JADEMAN COMICS

< > BLOOD SWORD 34 $1.95

< > BLOOD SWORD DYNASTY 21 36pg $1.25

< > DRUNKEN FIST 34 68pg $1.95

< > FORCE OF BUDDHA'S PALM 34 Nine Continents battles with Toothless Wei, lord of the Astro Clan. 68pg $1.95

< > IRON MARSHAL 11 It looks like the game's up for the Bloody Duke - he's been surrounded by the Emperor's guards and the Exterminator's men are on to him. 36pg $1.75

< > ORIENTAL HEROES 34 68pg $1.95

KITCHEN SINK

< > BIJOU/APEX TREASURY OF UNDERGROUND COMIX Reprint of The Best of Bijou Funnies and The Apex Treasury of Underground Comics featuring work by underground creators Robert Crumb, Bill Griffith, Art Spiegelman, Jay Lynch, Justin Green, Gilbert Shelton, Shary Flenniken, Spain and Rory Hayes. Featuring amongst others the very first "Maus", "Nard 'n' Pat" and the early "Zippy". Adult material. b&w $14.95

< > BUZZ 2 (Mark Landman, Seth Deitch, Basil Wolverton, Drew Friedman, Jim Woodring and Jeremy Edens) Selection of new comics and stories in "the magazine of excellent stimulation for excitable primates". Mature readers. b&w $2.95

< > FLASH GORDON VOLUME 2: THREE AGAINST MING (Alex Raymond) Second in this Flash Gordon reprint series, featuring all of the Sunday pages from August 1935 to August 1937. hardcover. 112pg $34.95

< > SPIRIT 78 Four stories from the post-Eisner era, two each from 1951 and '52: "The Christmas Spirit of 1951:Joe Fix", "The New Year's Spirit of 1952: Joshua Blows his Horn", "The History of Fabian Skimp" and "Design for Doomsday", plus an examination of the material reproduced by Eisner and series editor Tom Heintjes, new cover by Eisner. b&w $2.00

KITCHEN SINK

< > FLASH GORDON VOL 2: THREE AGAINST MING Reprint of Alex Raymond's classic space serial as Flash, Dale and Doctor Zarkov fight their way through the maze of the planet Mongo, while pursued by Ming the Merciless. Rescheduled. Hard and softcover. 112pg $19.95/$34.95

< > MELODY BOOK ONE: THE ORGIES OF ABITIBI (Rancourt & Boivin) Collection of Melody #1-4, the autobiographical tale of Sylvie Rancourt's passage from teenage housewife in rural Quebec to nude dancer in the province's cities. Plus new story, "How I met Mick" Soft and hardcover. Adult. b&w $14.95/$29.95

MARVEL COMICS

SHIPPING APRIL 2ND

< > AVENGERS WEST COAST 71 (Roy Thomas & Ryan + Bulanadi) Spider-Woman joins the AWC to fight Dr Demonicus in the continuing "Pacific Overlords" $1.00

< > BLACK PANTHER: PANTHER'S PREY 2 (of 4; McGregor & D Turner) T'Challa is still battling to save Wakanda from the drugs which have poisoned his people. Bookshelf format. Rescheduled. $4.95

< > CAPTAIN AMERICA 386 (Gruenwald & Lim + Bulanadi) Concluding the two-part teaming with the USAgent, with back-up story drawn by Mark Bagley, "Diamondback". $1.00

< > DAMAGE CONTROL 1 (McDuffie & Colon + Wiacek) Newsprint reprint of Damage Control limited series with preview of Damage Control III. $3.95

< > DAREDEVIL 293 (Chichester & Weeks + Williamson) While Taskmaster and Tombstone are at war Daredevil and the Punisher look on, with DD prepared to await the outcome and the Punisher desiring both their deaths. $1.00

< > DAREDEVIL ANNUAL 7 (Wright & Garney + ?) First part of crossover with Captain America andPunisher annuals. Nick Fury and DD team up to scotch Baron Strucker's plans. $2.00

< > DARKHAWK 4 (Fingeroth & Manley) Darkhawk takes on the new super-villain Blue Steel and the secrets of his amulet unfold. $1.00

< > DEATHLOK SPECIAL 2 (of 4; McDuffie & Wright + Guice + Williams) Reprint of second issue of bookshelf format Deathlok limited series. RO 48pg $2.00

< > FOOLKILLER 8 (of 10; Gerber & Birch + Giarrano) "The Sane Must Inherit the Earth", proclaims the new Foolkiller. Mature readers. RO $1.75

< > MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS 77 Featured in this issue: "Wolverine: Weapon X", part 6 (of 13) (Barry Windsor-Smith); "Shanna the She-Devil", part 10 (of 10) (G. Jones & Gulacy + G. Martin); "Sgt Fury & Dracula", part 1 (of 3) (Murray & Lyle + Rubinstein); "Mr Fantastic" (Fingeroth & Jensen) Cover by Barry Windsor-Smith. £1.25

< > NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER 15 (John Byrne) Namor and co. investigate the corporate shenanigans of their rival in the Savage Land while drugs-dealer Desmond Marrs (he needed the money) attracts the Punisher's attention. $1.00

< > SHE-HULK 28 (Furman & ? + ?) She-Hulk discovers that her next-door-neighbour is actually an intergalactic big-game hunter. The object of his desire is big, green and in the neighbourhood. RO $1.50

< > SWEET XVI 2 (of 6; Barbara Slate) Who will Antony take to Cleopatra's b'day party. $1.00

< > THE UNCANNY X-MEN 277 (Claremont & J Lee + S Williams) Conclusion of the "X-Men in Space" story, with our boys joining forces with Deathbird in order to save Professor Xavier. $1.00

< > WEB OF SPIDER-MAN 77 (Isabella & Savuik + K. Williams) Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk's bete noir

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the inheritor slug it out. $1.00

SHIPPING APRIL 9TH

< > AKIRA 29 (Otomo & Duffy + Oliff) While the military have landed and are moving in on the forces of the Great Tokyo Empire, Tetsuo's psychically-fabricated arm mutates... Rescheduled. Mature readers. $3.95

< > ALF 42 (Gallagher & Haller + Manak + Severin) ALF leaves the Earth in unexplained self-fight and receives a distress call from New Melmak, answering which reunites him with Rhonda, Skip and a cast of thousands of ALFs. $1.00

< > ALPHA FLIGHT 97 (Nicieza & Manley) The Final Option: part 1 (of 4) Featuring the reappearance of Her and Nova in anticipation of the future Avengers/Alpha Flight joint venture in battle with Galactus. RO $1.50

< > AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 348 (Michelinie & Larsen + Emberlin) Spider-Man realises that the Sandman is one of the Avengers, guesting the "Earth's Mightiest Mortals", The Avengers. $1.00

< > BARBIE 6 (Trusiani & Slate + Cool) Barbie plays with her show horse plus reports from the Barbie Children's Summit held in NY in November. RO $1.00

< > DEADLY FOES OF SPIDER-MAN 2 (of 4; Fingeroth & Gammill + Migrom + Machlan) From the baddies' standpoint, the story continues in this limited series with Spidey dealing with a member of the Sinister Syndicate who goes to trial. $1.00

< > GHOST RIDER 12 (Mackie & Saltares) Ghost Rider and the Spirit of Vengeance, Johnny Blaze fight to the death. RO $1.00

< > GROO THE WANDERER 78 (Sergio Aragones with Evanier) "The Book Burners" looks at censorship and features the return of Weaver and Scribe. $1.00

< > METROPOL 4 (Ted McKeever) Jason Notochard's now transformed into the entity Enoch and marshals others like him to become the super-human protectors of Metropol. Mature readers. RO 32pg $2.95 < > MIGHTY MOUSE 9 (Galla-gher & Colon + Severin) Evil rodent telepath Mousterminds battles MM by turning everyone against him, plus "Bat-Bat: Year One" with BB's battle with the Smoker. $1.00 < > PUNISHER ANNUAL 4 (Wright & Hebert + ?) "Baron Strucker" storyline continues from the DD annual with the Punisher and Nick Fury in uneasy concert against the Nazi behind Hydra's rebirth. $2.00

< > PUNISHER ARMORY 2 (Eliot R Brown) Continuing compendium of the Punisher's weapons and equipment. RO $1.75

< > QUASAR 23 (Gruenwald + Capullo & K Williams) Cosmos in Collision: Part 5 (of 7) Quasar, "quite dead", joins Kid Reaper in order to stop the cosmic assassin destroying Eon. Guesting: Ghost Rider. $1.00

< > SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN 186 (Dixon & Carr + Williamson) Legendary King Kull's victim returns from the dead to give Cimmerian grief. b&w 60pg $2.25

< > SLEEPWALKER 1 (Budiansky & Blevins) Rick Sheridan's mind is invaded by an alien which is activated when he's asleep - thus the Sleepwalker, whose realm is the Mindscape that links all sentient beings. Future issues will feature guest appearances of the dream versions of the X-Men, X-Factor, the FF, and the Avengers plus a crossover series. $1.00

< > TOXIC AVENGER 3 (Moench & Ramos + Mayerick) "Night of the Living Hardbodies" tells the tale of the Toxic Avenger's confrontation with a legion of health club zombies (thanks to Apocalypse Inc) RO $1.50

< > WOLVERINE 40 (Hama & Silvestri + Green) Wolverine fights Pierce's Wolverine clone over the fate of android Elsie Dee. RO $1.75

< > ZORRO 7 (of 12; Rimmer & Taylor) $1.00

SHIPPING APRIL 16TH

< > AVENGERS 333 (Hama & Ryan + Palmer) In their new mansion the Avengers slug it out with Doctor Doom. $1.00

< > CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL 10 (Chichester & Guice + ?) Baron Strucker's in trouble when Nick Fury and the Cap join forces to defeat him. Conclusion of 3-parter begun in Daredevil Annual 7 and Punisher Annual 4. $2.00

< > CAR WARRIORS 1 (of 4; Dixon & Dillon + Winslade) Adaptation of the "Car Wars" game, set in post-apoc future with anti-hero driver Chaco Vasquez, a sort of post-modern Robin Hood. Rescheduled. RO $2.25

< > CONAN 245 (Thomas & Hartle + DeCarlo) Conan, Red Sonja and Zula contend with a flock of hungry bat-creatures led by Varnae, ancient King of the Vampires. $1.00

< > DAMAGE CONTROL III #1 (of 4; McDuffie & Baker) New limited series in which the super-hero clean-up crew are accused of creating their own disasters in order to have something to do. Future guest appearances from the Hulk, the New Warriors and Spider-Man. $1.25

< > DEATHLOK SPECIAL 3 (of 4; McDuffie & Wright + Cowan + Magyar) Reprint of the third issue of the bookshelf format Deathlok limited series in anticipation of the series beginning later this year. Bi-weekly. RO 48pg $2.00

< > EXCALIBUR 38 (Lobdell & Badger) Featuring the Avengers West Coast and Doctor Doom with the 3-part "Promethium Exchange" storyline. RO $1.75

< > GI JOE 113 (Hama & Statema + Emberlin) Battle Force 2000 take large losses as they pull the stops out with Cobra forces. $1.00

< > GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 11 (Valentino & Montano) Guest star Ghost Rider unexpectedly (?) pops up here, the 31st century version, that is. He attacks, in the mistaken opinion that they are minions of the Church of Universal Truth.

< > INCREDIBLE HULK 382 (David & Keown + Farmer) In his newly acquired role as agent of the Pantheon, the new Hulk crashes into action. $1.00

< > KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON 11 (Abnett & Tomlinson + Erskine + Georgiou + Lanning) With Iron Man guesting agent Ben Gallagher uses the Power of the Grail to rescue Kate McClellan and Union Jack from Bane. $1.95

< > MARVEL AGE 101 Featuring interviews and previews of new Marvel series with customary columns. $1.00

< > MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS 78 Featuring: "Wolverine: Weapon X" - part 7 (of 13) (Barry Windsor-Smith); "Iron Man" (Murray & Steacey);"Sgt Fury & Dracula" part 3 (of 3) (Murray & Lyle + Rubinstein) and "Shadowcat & Meggan" (Flaxman & Curtis + Ivy) Cover, Barry Windsor-Smith. $1.25;

< > MARVEL TALES 250 (Claremont & Miller + Wiacek) Reprint; Spider-Man and the FF in concert from Marvel Team-up 100. $1.50

< > PUNISHER 49 (Dixon & Wagner) While rescuing a kidnap victim the Punisher finds himself the prey. Debut of new regular artist Ron Wagner. $1.00

< > ROBOCOP 16 (Furman & Wildman + Candelario) Implant TV, technology which allows tv broadcasts to be received inside the head, has Robo held in a thrall - but there's a threat - it seems to be trying to control him. RO $1.50

< > SAMURAI CAT 1 (of 3; Macchio & Cirocco + Hummel) Adaptation of Mark E Rogers Samurai Cat - Miaowara Tomokato feline super-hero. Literary parody series with cover by the creator. $2.25

< > SHIELD 24 (Chichester & Guice + Beatty) After a Hydra raid and the destruction of S H I E L D, Fury calls for an attack.

< > SPIDER-MAN 10 (McFarlane) Perceptions: part 4 (of 5) Spider-Man and Wolverine believe that a mistake has been made and so try to protect Wendigo from the authorities. RO $1.75

< > SPIDER-MAN SAGA 4 (of 4; Herdling & various) Condensed history of Spider-Man's career finishes with this issue. RO $2.95

< > SPIDER-MAN'S WEDDING Trade paperback collection of comics, newsstrips and the "live" wedding held at Shea Stadium, NY - in fact, anything to do with the nuptials. $12.95

< > WHAT IF? 26 (Busiek & McDonnell) New York city cowers as the flack hits from DD's accidental death in "What if the Punisher had Killed Daredevil?" Guesting Spider-Man, the Kingpin and Cloak and Dagger. $1.25

SHIPPING APRIL 23RD

< > BARB'E FASHION 6 (Slate & Trusiani, Cool & Conner, Lucas & Mushynsky) Foiled fashion shoot for career girl Barbie. RO $1.00

< > CLOAK & DAGGER 18 (Kavanagh & Ross + Williams) Starring Ghost Rider and Spider-Man with the conclusion of the "Eye of Power" storyline. Bi-monthly. RO $1.50

< > FANTASTIC FOUR 353 (Walt Simonson) Guesting the

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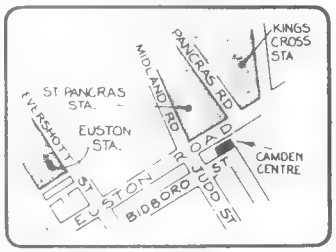

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Avengers in the final episode of "Timestorm", begun in Fantastic Four 337. $1.00

< > FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL 20 (Milgrom) First of 4-part crossover story to be continued in Thor, Silver Surfer and The Guardians of the Galaxy annuals in a tale spread across 1,000 years between the 30th and 20th centuries. $2.00

< > IRON MAN 269 (Byrne & Romita + Wiacek) First chapter in "The Hunt for Red October" storyline with The Black Widow joining the series' cast. $1.00

< > LIFE OF GROO (Graphic novel; Aragones and Evanier) Featuring the origin of Groo, Groo's parents, his childhood friends, and how he became a stupid barbarian. Rescheduled. 64pg $9.95

< > MARVEL FANFARE 57 Part 2 of the 4-part "Shanna the She-Devil" story (Gerber & Blevins) and the new Captain Marvel reassesses her motives in "Power and Duty" (Stern & Mantlo + Freeman + Milgrom). Plus some full-page artwork by Batman artist Norm Breyfogle. Cover: Joe Chiodo. RO £2.25

< > NEW WARRIORS 12 (Nicieza & Bagley + Mahlstedt) Forever Yesterday: part 2 (of 3) Egyptian X-Men and Avengers encounter the New Warriors while trapped in the Sphinx's universe. $1.00

< > SILVER SURFER 48 (Starlin & Lim + Christopher) 50th issue, in which the SS battles Thanos's re-animated statue acting as his proxy as the conclusion to the "Soul Gem Saga" is reached with the return of Drax, Adam Warlock, etc. also anticipating the crossover story "The Infinity Gauntlet". $1.50

> SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN 177 $1.00

< > THOR 433 (DeFalco & Frenz) The original Thor is no more: a new Thunder God takes his place. $1.00

< > TRANSFORMERS 79 (Furman & Wildman + Baskerville) Four of the Decepticons decide to take over the Earth in their race's bid for universal domination. Meanwhile the Autobots are in pursuit. $1.00

< > X-FACTOR 67 (Lee & Portacio + Thibert) Travelling to Egypt to discover Apocalypse's secret, X-Factor are led to the Blue Area on the Moon. $1.00

< > X-MEN CLASSIC 60 Reprint of X-Men 156 (Claremont & Cockrum + Rubinstein). in which they and the Starjammers fight for the throne of the Shi'ar Empire. $1.25

SHIPPING APRIL 30TH

< > CONAN SAGA 51 (Thomas & J Buscema + Gan) "Ballad of the Belit" continues with Conan 59 & 60 plus Savage Sword of Conan 59. b&w $2.25

< > DEATHLOK SPECIAL 4 (of 4; McDuffie & Wright + Cowan + Magyar) Final issue in reprint series. RO 48pg $2.00

< > DOCTOR STRANGE 30 (R Thomas & Marrinan + McKenna) Strange Tales: part 5; in the concluding episode Topaz's fate is decided. RO $1.50

< > MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS 79 Featuring "Wolverine: Weapon X" - part 8 (of 13) (Barry Windsor - Smith) "Sunspot" (Edelman & Byrne); "Sgt Fury & Dracula" - part 3 (of 3) (Murray & Lyle + Rubinstein) and "Dr Strange" (Campanella & Geiger). cover: Barry Windsor-Smith. $1.25

< > MARVEL UNIVERSE: MASTER EDITION 7 Spiral-bound format with 24 entries, each featuring graphics and information on characters: Daredevil, Callisto, Firestar, Nova and Black Knight. RO 48pg $3.95

< > MOON KNIGHT 27 (DeMatteis & Garney + Palmer) Scarlet Redemption: part 2 (of 5) Revitalisation of Moon Knight continues as basics of the character are re-defined. Sienkiewicz covers. RO $1.50

< > THE NAM 57 (Dixon & VanSant + DeZuniga) The Death of Joe Hallen: part 4 (of 5) Drug-dealers posing as FBI blag Hallen's unit into a dangerous mission. RO $1.50

< > PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL 31 (Baron & A Kubert) The Kamchatkan Konspiracy: part 1 (of 3) Eco-terrorists hold the Alaskan Pipeline hostage with the ultimatum "Humans off the planet" or the destruction of the pipeline and the Alaskan wilderness. Despite their beautiful leader, the Punisher's not going to take it lying down. RO $1.75

< > THOR ANNUAL 16 (DeFalco & Frenz) Part two of the Guardians crossover sees confusion about the real identity of the Thor they meet. Continued next month in the Silver Surfer Annual. $2.00

MIRAGE STUDIOS

< > TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 36 (Zulli) The Soul's Triad: part 3 (of 3) "Soul's Wake" - The fallen turtle has to make the ultimate choice. b&w 32pg $2.00

RIP OFF PRESS

< > DILLINGER 1 (Lee) Part-biog of gangster Dillinger. Mature readers. b&w 36pg $2.50

< > THE MAGICAL NYMPHINI 2 Maxima the Magic Wand and The Magical Nymphini embark on an action-packed super-hero adventure. Adult. b&w 36pg $2.50

< > POST BROS 19 (Howarth) Savage Henry and Caroline gather for a video party in Bugtown. Rescheduled. Mature readers. b&w 36pg $2.00

TSR

< > THE WORLDS OF R.I.P. 3 (of 4; Powell & Olliffe) The Battle For Smithville: part 3 (of 4). Paranormal scientist Jane Simpson and psychiatrist Adam Stone join forces with a werewolf with residues of human sensibilities. 40pg $2.95

< > THE WORLDS OF 13: ASSASSIN 3 (of 4; Moench & Phipps) The Brotherhood Conspiracy: part 3 (of 4) Agent 13 discovers that the Brotherhood has been formed with the intention of spreading the message that migration to the stars is the only hope for human survival. 40pg $2.95

TUNDRA PUBLISHING

< > BRATPACK 4 (of 5; Veitch) Tongue-in-cheek story of four violent super-heroes and their teenage assistants. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

< > FUN BOYS SPRING SPECIAL (Bonivert) Introducing Barry the rebel, Michael the sensible, and Brian, the neglected, all growing up in the '60s. b&w 32pg $1.95

< > RAIN 2 (of 6; Stark and Stevens) Book Two: The Tree. Kurt Summers, a man haunted by experiences in the Congo, attempts to unpick his life and discover the root of his inner turmoil. Mature readers. b&w 32pg $1.95

< > SCORCHED EARTH 1 (of 6; Gaydos & Gentile) A story set in a future where the Earth is desert and people gradually wasting away from plague. Indian tribes, immersed in their own mythology, battle for land rights. The human race's only hope for survival rests in the hands of a scientist who has developed a device for controlling the weather. Printed on eco-conscious recycled paper, and shipping on Earth Day, April 22nd 1991. 32pg $2.95

VIZ

< > AREA 88 VOLUME 2 (Kaoru Shintani) International mercenary pilots battling for blood and money. b&w 176pg $12.95

< > CRYING FREEMAN PART TWO #9 (of 9; Koike & Ikegami) The samurai sword, Muramasa possesses Ivory Fan, and a battle for control of the sword's will ensues as Ivory is threatened by vengeance-seeking gangsters on the street of Kowloon. adult. b&w 72pg $3.95

< > HOROBI BOOK TWO #5 (of 7; Yoshihisa Tagami) As half a million people die in the aftermath of a supernatural disaster, Shuichi prepares to take control of Satori. Mature readers. b&w 64pg $4.25

< > THE PROFESSIONAL: GOLGO 13 #1 (of 6; Takao Saito) Duke Togo, aka Golgo 13 is hired by the UK government to assassinate Juan Peron immediately before the outbreak of war in the Falklands. 48pg $4.95

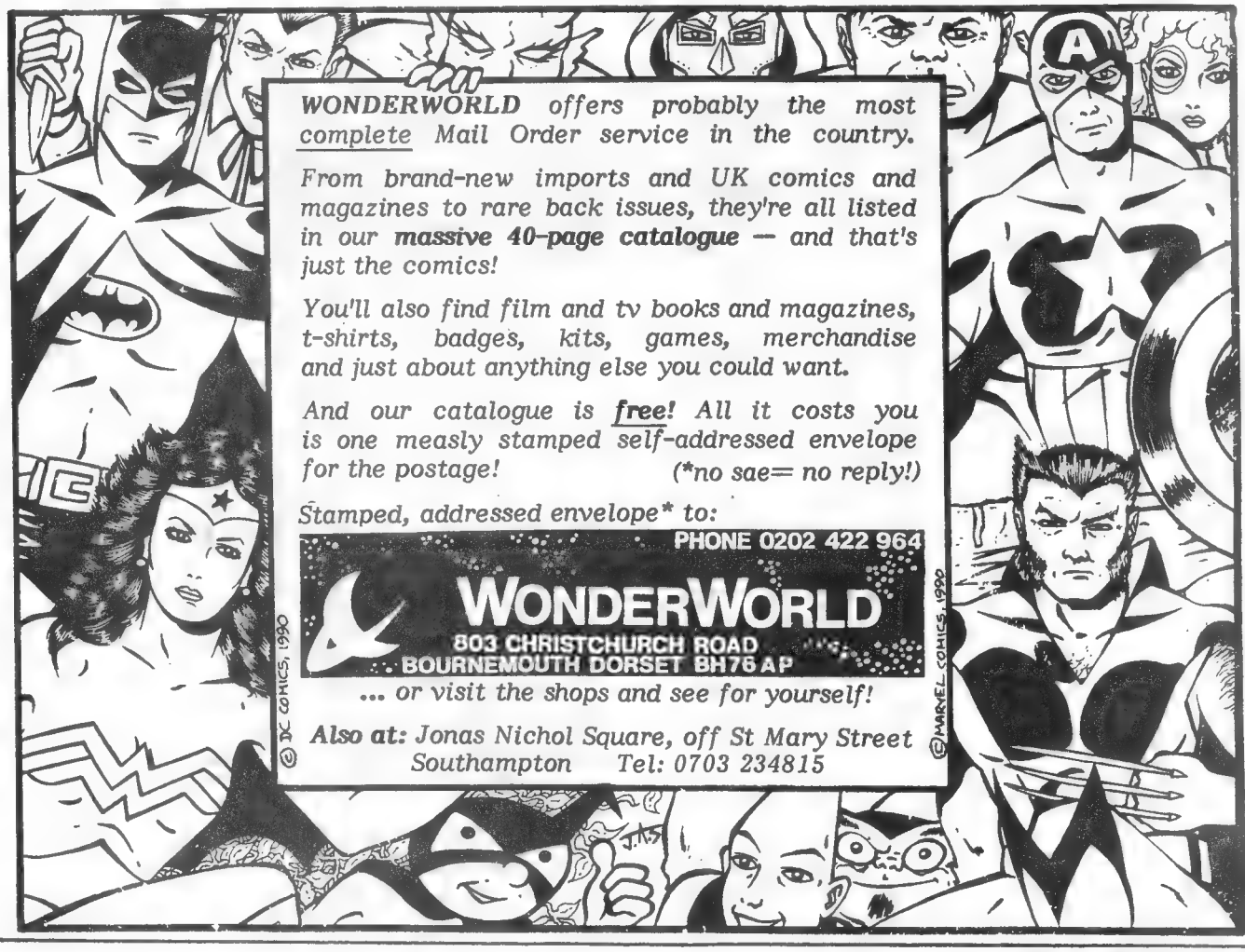
< > 2001 NIGHTS 10 (of 10; Yukinobu Hoshino) SF two-hander reaches its conclusion with eco-adventures and the fate of the human race in the balance. Mature readers. b&w 72pg $4.25

VORTEX

< > THE LEGENDS OF NASCAR 2 ((Tuschak & Vossburg) Featuring racing great Bobby Allison. 32pg $2.00

< > MISTER X 17 (Edgington & Holewczynski) Part 2 of "Mister Ex". b&w 28pg $2.50

< > YUMMY FUR 25 (Chester Brown) Adult. b&w $2.50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COMMENT

Two Comment contributions this month in our feature which enables readers and professionals to express personal opinions on the comics industry.

As such, the views stated do not necessarily reflect those of ***Comics International****, and space will be given to opposing opinions in future issues.*

Do we really need a Price Guide?

A response to the debate from ALAN AUSTIN creator of of UK Comic-Book Price Guide

FOLLOWING on from the pieces by Duncan McAlpine, Pete Phillips, Mike Conroy and others, brought to my attention by fans still in the business, I though I'd add my own view, albeit with a slightly detached viewpoint. I left the comics business five years ago.

Whereas I share Pete Phillips' fond memories of early fandom, before it all became very self-conscious, and fandom itself a tool in the hands of the comic publishers, we must attempt to face reality and deal with what the comic world has become. Or learn how best to take advantage of it, depending on your point of view.

It was around the mid-1970s when I first heard fans saying that comics were going through a boom period, that the bubble would have to burst. By the mid-1980s, dealers were saying that the comic business had 'mushroomed' in size since the 1970s. And it goes on.

Myself, I've been in a comic shop since the early days, when the general public would have difficulty figuring out just what kind of shop it was ("Twenty Rothmans, please.").

Now, although we've not quite reached the stage where a comic shop is as commonplace a sight as, say, a record shop, with at least one in each town of any size, I think we're getting there. The comic strip, born a century or so ago, is well on the way to becoming the printed medium of entertainment and information of the future. (That's why I deal in books now. Sod the future.)

All this means that there is more comic book material being produced now than at any time in the past and, more importantly, a wider variety of comics for an ever growing readership. So the fan who restricts himself to buying the latest issues is doing fine. It's with back issues and collecting that the problems arise. It's all so hideously distorted and out of proportion.

In the early days of UK comics fandom, the mid to late Sixties, it was the aim of most collectors I knew to put together a complete run of Marvel, or perhaps DC from 1960 up, and this was considered affordable by younger people, even students. You could find a lot of back issues in secondhand bookshops or on market stalls, but supplies were already beginning to dry up as they fell into the hands of dealers and collectors.

Prices really started to take off in the mid-1970s, and by the end of the decade it was almost unheard of to find older comics in secondhand outlets. Anyone with a comic collection of any size would sell it to a comic dealer.

By this time most collectors found it quite unrealistic to even attempt to buy sets of 1960s up Marvel or DC. Those that did were in better paying jobs, and certainly weren't students. Completing a set of **The Fantastic Four** or **X-Men** was probably an equivalent expense to buying the full set of Marvel a decade or so before.

The situation was made worse in 1989/90. American dealers, perhaps noticing a swing in interest away from prime early Golden Age (**Action** 1, **Batman** 1, etc), or attempting to capitalise on the Silver Age being nearly three decades old ("These are the new Golden Age, man."), or perhaps just plain bored sitting around at conventions and wondering what to hype up next, decided to do a job on the early Marvels.

So a nice copy of **Fantastic Four** 1 (1961) is worth about the same as a good **Batman** 1 (1940)? That's absurd. Given the circumstances affecting the scarcity of the latter — the wartime paper drive, its 'removable' pin-up back cover, and the two decades following its release when comics were considered disposable junk — there just shouldn't be any comparison in value.

The hype of early Marvels was immediately taken up over here, even on the British copies with '9d' instead of '10¢'. At a recent comic mart, copies of **Hulk** 1 were offered at £350 and £1,350. The former sold, the latter didn't.

However, the chief comparison I wish to make is not between comic prices now and comic prices then, or between one type of comic and another, but to compare prices with other areas of collecting entirely. You see, I am often told by comic dealers that so-and-so sells at such-and-such a price, so it must be worth it, or the argument is put forward that if a dealer sells something too quickly it must be under-priced. I find this very dubious, to say the least.

Additionally, the whole infra-structure of comic pricing has its own kind of logic, whereby if a 1962 ≠1 Marvel superhero comic is worth £1,000, then a 1964 Marvel ≠1 superhero comic has got to be worth at least £300, and so on, or it looks too low. Whenever the prime first issues are hyped up, there is a knock-on effect with everything that followed.

What this has resulted in is gross over-pricing of many minor 1960s first issues. I'm talking about Marvels and DCs — titles that aren't esoteric, but hardly of any great significance either. And certainly of no great rarity.

Shall I make some comparisons, then? For example, that for the price of a top grade **X-Men** 1 (1963), you could get a top grade copy of the first edition of **Hound of the Baskervilles**, published in 1902. For a little less than the price of a 1966 **Green Lantern** 40 you could get a wartime Agatha Christie first edition in its very scarce dustwrapper. You could exchange a **Spider-Man** 129 for one of the rarest Buddy Holly albums (— if the Buddy Holly fan happened to be extremely dim). Instead of paying the going price for a **Spider-Man** 1, you could instead invest (wisely) in a very fine large bronze portrait coin of the Emperor Caligula (that's from nearly 2,000 years ago). Do these values of non-comics collectables seem low? Then you've been spending too much on comics!

Making these comparisons is not irrelevant. I've mentioned items that not only will be familiar to you, but that are or associated with household names.

Who are you going to impress by saying you've paid £100 for **Atom** 1? Another comic collector, maybe. But it's just one of dozens of second-string superhero comics of the Sixties — and so what?

There is a reason why the comic collecting field is almost unique in suffering from price hyping. No, it's not because it's one of the largest, fastest growing hobbies in the world. That may be, but comics have always had commensurately large print runs. No comic published after 1960 can honestly be regarded as scarce, rare or especially difficult to get.

Write to the half dozen major British comic dealers, and you'll get practically any 1960s ≠1 you want. Write to a top US Golden Age dealer for a **Marvel Comics** 1, and he'll ask you what grade you want it in.

To make one last comparison outside the field, coins or stamps that fetch the five figure sums commanded by the top Golden Age dealers are Swiss auction items that turn up once or twice a decade, and make headlines in the numismatic or philatelic journals. On a world-wide basis, these are bona fide rarities.

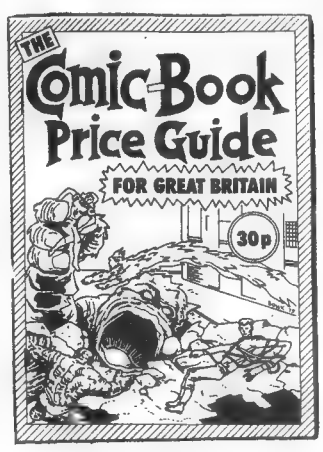
In comics, it all has so little to do with rarity, availability or demand, or even the popularity of the hobby. Comics are bought and collected, by and large, by young people who do not have the adult responsibilities, not to mention expenses, of a family, a mortgage, or just maintaining an adult's lifestyle and social life.

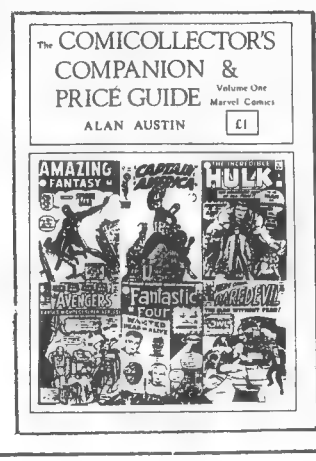
Their youthful enthusiasm, unhampered by any sense of comparative values, and not restricted by the living expenses of adulthood, leads them to pay whatever prices for comics the dealer thinks he can get away with.

In a hard capitalistic sense, there isn't so much wrong with that. If the dealers want to charge it, and the fans are happy to pay it, let them. But it does become apparent that something is wrong when the fan comes to sell the comics back to a dealer. A problem with price-hyped comics is that they hold their prices, but not their values.

Many times over the years I have seen a comic rocket up in a matter of weeks or months. It sells well, the hype is successful. But a year or two later? Something else is flavour of the month. Poor fan has to sell his collection, gets an offer from his favourite comic shop. Disappointed with offer, "But I paid £XX for *** ≠1 alone!" Dealer: "Sorry, got a whole box full of that one out back. Doesn't sell now."

The investment aspect of comics is often emphasised these days, but I would bet in most cases, anyone assembling a collection from the Eighties onwards that comes to sell them to a dealer will, with inflation taken into account, invariably be making a loss. That's not to say that a careful investor couldn't profit on specific comics, though. But that would take a detailed knowledge and





understanding of the comics field that not all fans have.

That comic prices are so high is doubly absurd when you consider that we are heading for, more probably in, a recession. Lower prices would mean more sales for the dealer, more comics for the fan, and a healthier market all round. Isn't it ridiculous that one of Britain's top dealers recently told me he wouldn't buy early Marvel #1s even at 50% of retail, because he couldn't afford to put so much money into stock he probably wouldn't be able to sell?

That the publishers are getting in on the investment angle, viz. the recent (sometimes bagged) **Spider-Man** 1, is worrying. Can a comic with a 2.4 million print run ever be scarce and valuable? I doubt it. With investment potential promoted at the highest level, it's sad evidence of just how far we've come since the days when comics were just fun to read.

I've deliberately not addressed directly the question that began this debate, because all I have to say on it is this, in closing.

We may need a price guide, to keep in touch with what the market is up to, but if we want to read horror stories, give me HP Lovecraft any day. (Did you know that you can get Lovecraft's first and rarest book, published in 1939, for less than the cost of a **Showcase** 4?)

(c) Alan Austin, 1991.

2000AD: Thrill Power Confused

COMMENT from STEVEN FOUNTAIN

EXCUSE THE PUN, but it appears that **2000AD** is facing a crisis. In the current climate, when 'alternative' comics clamour for the adult market using fragmented narrative, gritty realism and the odd flash of thigh, titles still go under with depressing regularity.

As the corpses of well-meaning but commercially insecure comics pile up, **2000AD** continues to bestride the market.

The continuation of Fleetway's flagship title seems assured, but unfortunately this particular flagship is not so much forging ahead as going which ever way the wind may blow.

This once-humble pun-strewn weekly has grown into a Tharg of all trades and a master of none. It took fourteen years, but **2000AD** is now caught by its consistant popularity.

Things began to be confusing when writers like Smith, Milligan, Ennis and Morrison started to make their scripts more literate and analytical. Not that this is a bad thing in itself, but it started to lose its younger readers, its roots, resulting in the return of the dear old action-adventure story to compensate. Again, not neccesarily a bad thing, attempting to cater for every market. I, myself, remember buying early **2000AD** issues just to look at the dinosaur pictures — the subtleties of stories like 'Mach 1' were not for me!

But a serious problem arises when the quality of the non-stop action stories is allowed to decline. Looking at recent issues, the simple and direct, yet humorous and dynamic style has vanished. No more the old Strontium Dog, Ace Trucking Company and early Rogue Trooper approach.

You can tell that Alan Grant and John Wagner are tiring after so many years, and new strips like John Brosnan's Night Zero display nothing but contempt for any reader.

Three factors are dampening the vitality of **2000AD**. The neglect of the adventure story; the long-term readers who demand something more, and the writers moving from mass market to up-market. Therein lies the confusion.

Rogue Trooper, carefully revamped by John Smith is a perfect example. Much to everyone's confusion it has slipped right back into tired story lines reminiscent of the end of the 'Nu Earth' saga.

While **Judge Dredd: The Megazine** allows creators more freedom, with its older audience, **2000AD** must continue to keep the kids happy.

Unfortunately, keeping them happy simply by maintaining the quality of the strips is no longer the approach. No longer does Tharg stay refreshingly aloof from fads. Now he is an indie hip-hop yo-check-it-out beat freak, and has something called Roxilla writing a 'record' column.

I suppose that identifying a market and going for it is commendable, but a fad-free prog from the Seventies could still sell in newsagents today without resorting to gimmicks.

Now we have to contend with a sad reflection of the past, pandering to a night club going, big city based set.

In the Seventies and Eighties, we saw the occasional in-joke from Tharg and his droids, but now we witness an editorial team prone to perpetual back-slapping, and using the comic and character of Tharg as an outlet for their own tastes.

I cannot seriously believe that Tharg wants to play key-boards for Bass-o-Matics remix of a Madonna hit single. What would the anorak, duffle coat or leather jacket lodges of the Squaxx-dek-Tharggo say to this?

Let me close by saying that I think in the main the strips are at least equal to years gone by, but I don't know **anyone** who reads more than half of the comic any more. They're either insulted (by the banality of 'Beyond Zero' and 'Harlem Heroes') or confused and disinterested (by the ramblings of 'Hewligan's Haircut' and 'Danzig's Inferno').

Please decide what you want to be, Tharg. You cannot be all things to all readers and your jarring styles please none of the people none of the time.

Future shock? Culture shock more like.

Splundig vur Thrigg, broods.

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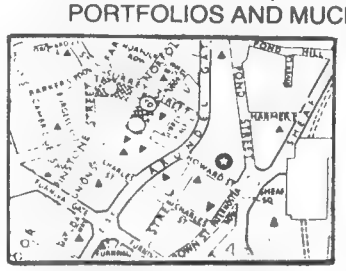

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OPENS AT NOON

RETAIL index

imp = air imported US issues
back = back issues stocked
fnzs = comics fanzines
merch = comics-related items (T shirts, posters, toys, games, models, etc.)
ind = US independent comics (non-newsstand titles)
Brit = British comics
frgn = foreign language titles
u/gs = underground comics
ppbks = related paperbacks
hbks = related hardbacks
m/o = mail order service
STO = new comics reserved
RPG = role-playing games

LONDON

● ACME COMIC SHOP, 391 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW9 8LQ. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 6.00pm. (imp, back, fnzs, ind, u/gs, merch, Brit, frgn, m/o, murals by McCarthy, Hewlett, Phillips). Includes The Basement Gallery featuring original comic art exhibitions 071-274 6697

● AVALON COMICS 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11. Mon - Fri 11.00am - 5.45pm, Sat 9.30am - 6.00pm (imp, back, ind, Brit, STO) 071-924 3609

● COMIC SHACK, 720 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3NN. Mon - Thurs 9.30am - 5.30pm; Fri & Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm. Also by appointment, phone 081 555 9303 (back, fnz merch, u/g, frgn, ppbks, hbks, m/o to wants list with sae.) 081-539 7260

● COMIC SHOWCASE, 76 Neal St, London WC2. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 6.00pm excl Thurs 10.00am - 7.00 pm; Sun 12.00 - 5.00pm (imp, back fnz, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, ppbks, hbks, cartoon books, original art) 071-240 3664

● ETERNAL COMICS, 695 Seven Sisters Road, London N15. Mon 11 - 6.30; Tues & Thurs 11 - 6 Wed 11 - 4; Fri 11 - 7; Sat 10 - 6.30 (imp, back, fnz, ind u/gs, Brit, original art, acid free backing boards, STO) 081-809 2022

● FANTASY INN (6ft under The Book Inn), 17 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H OEP. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 10.00pm; Sun 11am - 8.00pm. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, ppbks, frgn, hbks, m/o, RPG, STO, masks, fantasy/sf + horror ppbk, film mags) 071-839 2712

● FORBIDDEN PLANET, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG Mon - Wed + Sat 10am - 6pm; Thurs + Fri 10am -8pm (imp, back fnz, merch, ind, u/gs, Brit, frgn, ppbk, hbk, m/o, film & tv fantasy) 071 379 6042

● GARY'S BOOK & COMIC STALL, Site A65, The High Street, Walthamstow, London E17. Thur + Fri 9.30 - 4.30; Sat 8 - 5. Nearest tube: Walthamstow Central (imp, back, fnz, ind, ppbk, hbk, STO, annuals, children's books)

● GOSH! 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (opposite British Museum) 10am - 6pm 7 days a week inc Bank Holidays. Late nights Thurs & Fri til 7.00 (imp, back, ltd merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, ppbk, hbk, STO, largest selection of newspaper strip compilations in the UK) 071 636 1011

● HUNGRY BEAR COMICS, South London Book Centre, 18-19 Stockwell Street, Greenwich, London SE10. Wed, Thurs, Sat & Sun 9.00 - 6.00. (back, ind, Brit, ppbk, hbk, m/o, send sae with wants list to 57 Queens Rd, Leytonstone, London E11 1BA 081 539 7095

● KRYPTON KOMICS & BOOKS, from 25/3 at new location of: 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ(next to Tesco) Mon-Fri 9.30 - 6; Sat 9-6.30. Nearest tube: Seven Sisters Road. Until 23/3 at Unit 29, In-Shops, 37-43 South Mall, Edmonton Green Shopping Ctre, London N9. Mon-Sat 9 - 5.30. (imp, back, fnz, ind, ppbk, hbk, STO, m/o, annuals)
To 23/5: 081-807 5447
From 25/5: 081-807 5378

● MEANWHILE... 6A Camden Road, London NW1. Mon - Fri 10.30 - 7.00; Sat & Sun 10.30 - 6.00. (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, frgn, ppbk, portfolios, hbk, m/o -- send wants lists, customer enquiries welcomed.) 071-485 6600

● SKINNY MELINK'S COMIC SHOP, 66 Loampit Vale, Lewisham, London SE 13. Mon - Fri 10.30 - 6.30; Sat 9 - 6; Sun 10 - 5.30. (imp, back, fnz, ind, u/g, ppbks, hbk, m/o, videos and records) 081-318 0499

HOME COUNTIES

● AMERICAN COMIC ENTERPRISE, 1 Headgate Buildings, St John's Street, Colchester, Essex CO2 7AD. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts) 0206 561 912

● ATOMIC COMICS, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford Essex RM6 4AH. Tues - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 excl Fri 10.00 - 7.00. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, ppbk, hbk, STO, 2nd hand horror fantasy sf ppbks, original art, m/o - no lists, send wants list + sae or phone 081-597 8547

● CALAMITY COMICS, 160 Station Rd, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 6.00. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, videos) 081-427 3831

● EDGE OF FOREVER, Units 14 & 15, Bexleyheath Shopping Hall, 45 Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent. Mon - Sat (excl Wed) 10.00 - 5.00. (imp, m/o, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, STO, portfolios) 081-303 5099

○ ENIGMA THE GATEWAY, moving to 22 Keeley Road, Croydon from Indoor Market, 7 Park Street, Croydon, Surrey. Mon - Thurs 8.30 - 6.30; Fri + Sat 8.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, ppbk, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG & supplements)

● PHAZE II THE DEAD ZONE, 16 George St, Croydon. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, STO, model kits, model making, T-shirts, jewellery) 081 681 0640

● SIEGI'S COMICS & BAGS, now at Unit 3, 6 Orange Street, Canterbury, Kent. Mon - Sat 9 - 6 (imp, back, fnz, ind, merch, Brit, ppbk, m/o, STO, tv SF, gum cards, classic sf memorabilia) 0227 470840

● STATESIDE COMICS PLC, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF. Mon - Wed 10.00 - 7.00; Thurs & Fri 10.00 - 8.00; Sat 9.00 - 6.00; Sun 10.00 - 3.00 (or later by appointment). (imp, back, fnz, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, hbks, tv-film & fantasy, ppbk, m/o, STO) 081-449 5535 (10 lines)

● THE 4TH DIMENSION COMICS, Unit 35, In Shop Centre, Church St, Croydon, Surrey. Mon - Fri 9.00 -5.30; Sat 9 - 6.00pm. (imp, fnz, STO, frgn, ppbk, merch) 081 681 2597

● TIME TREK, Shoppers World, 17 The Mall, High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TR. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (late Thurs to 8.00) (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, ppbk, hbk, TV sf & film related merch, STO) 081 313 0677

MIDLANDS

● ANOTHER WORLD, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0533 515266

● ARRIVAL COMICS, 2 Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.15. imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, ppbk, hbk, m/o, horror videos, adult (non-porn) mags. 0902-313 660

● BOOKWORM, Unit 3 33-39 Tower Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Mon - Sat 11.00 - 4.00. (back, ind, u/g. Brit, ppbk, hbk, fantast & sf, early Penguins, general fiction & non-fic, records) 0553 760904/771880

● CENTRAL CITY COMICS 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, wants lists with sae) 0473 233 017

● COMICS ABOVE TULIP 2 Heathcote Street, Nottingham, NG1 3AF. Saturdays only 9.30 - 5.30 (back, ppbk, hbk, wants lists with SAE)

● FANTASY WORLD, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1NU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0782 279294 (fax 0782 202381)

● NOSTALGIA & COMICS, 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon - Thurs 9.15 - 5.45, Fri + Sat 9.15 - 6.00. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO) 021 643 0143

● NOSTALGIA & COMICS, 20 The Burgess, Coventry. Mon-Fri 10.00 - 5.30pm; Sat 9.00 - 6.00pm (imp, back, fnz, ind, Brit, ppbk, hbk, STO)

● OUTER LIMITS 4 The Broadway, Bedford, MK40 2TH. Tues - Sat 9am - 6.00pm, Mon 9am - 8pm. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, RPG, video) 0234 58581 (24hrs)

● PLANET X, 5 London Road, Worcester Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.30. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, m/o, STO -- advance orders taken each month) Phone/fax: 0905 355055

● SQUONK, 25 Midland Road, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 1HA. Mon to Thurs 10am - 5.30pm; Fri 9.30am - 6pm; Sat 9am - 5.30pm (imp, back, Brit merch, ind, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO)
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NORTH WEST

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● GOTHAM CITY COMICS Progress Centre, Charlton Place, Ardwick Green, Manchester M12 6HS. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, fnz, ind, Brit, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, tv fantasy, movie mags, film & comics related memorabilia) 061 274 3337 fax 061 274 3655

● ODYSSEY 7, 21 Hanging Ditch Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester M4 3ES. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm. (imp, back, sf - fantasy - horror bks, postcards, videos, badges, soundtracks, stills, LF

filmbooks, Star Trek, Dr Who.) 061 832 7044

● ODYSSEY 7, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RN. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm (imp, back, sf - fantasy - horror novels, postcards, posters, badges, stills, LF film bks, Trek, Who, etc) 061 273 6666

● THUNDERBOOKS, 332 Lytham Rd, Blackpool. 10 - 5.30 Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sat all year; Mon & Sun in season (closed Wed). Out of season open Wed, closed Sun + Mon. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, kits limited ppbk, m/o, t-shirts, media collectors' items) 0253-48321

● THUNDERBOOKS II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancs. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, fnz, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, limited ppbk, m/o, kits, t-shirts, media collector items. 0772-204287

NORTH EAST

● BOOKS N' COMICS, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, fnz, merch ind, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, Fleetway, horror - sf - fantasy ppbks, film mags, Dr Who, Star Trek, bags boxes & accessories.) 0642 249 143

● BOOKS N' COMICS, Unit 8, Regency West Mall, Princes Regent Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, fnz, ind, merch, u/g, ppbk, hbk, m/o, STO, Fleetway, horror/sf fantasy ppbk, film mags, Dr Who, Star Trek, boxes + bags + accessories) 0642 617 241

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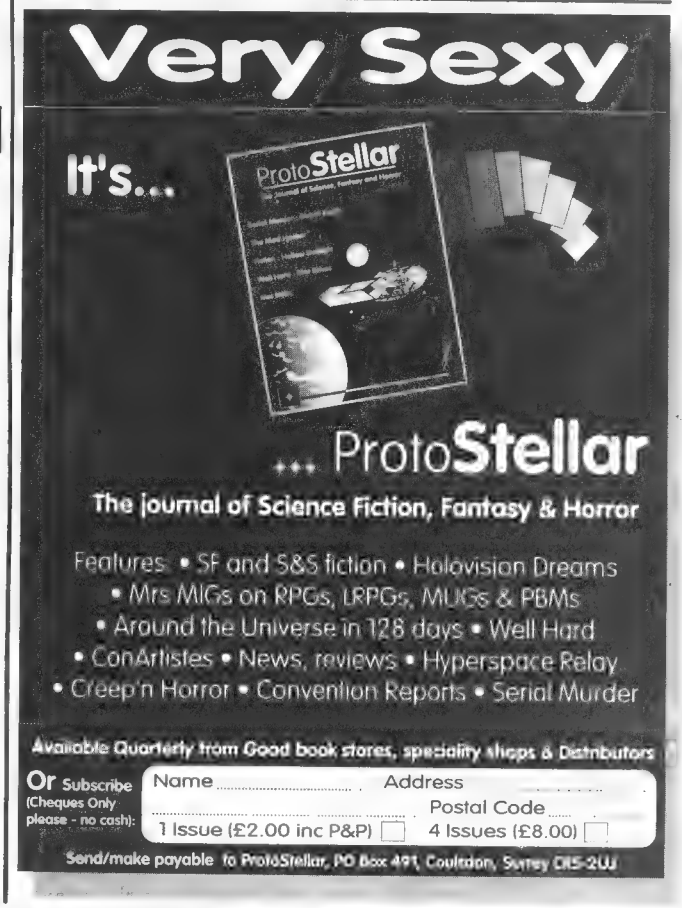
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CHARTS: December 1990

The following charts are based on the number of titles being imported from America for sale in the UK

Hardback and paperback editions of same work when issued simultaneously are treated as one.

First bracketed number is chart position on last month's output. Percentage figure following number of titles published shows market share with + or - indicating increase or decrease since previous month.

Compiled by Dez Skinn

	Publisher	Titles	Share
1	(1) Marvel Comics	61 (63)	14.6% -
2	(2) DC Comics	50 (55)	12.0% -
3	(3) Harvey Comics & Rockomics	19 (20)	4.5% -
4	(-) Greater Mercury	17 (1)	4.1% +
5	(4=) Eternity	16 (17)	3.8% -
6	(7) Epic/Marvel	15 (15)	3.6% -
7	(4=) Archie	14 (17)	3.3% -
8=	(6) Fantagraphics	12 (16)	2.9% -
	(10=) Innovation	12 (9)	2.9% +
10=	(10=) Caliber	9 (9)	2.1% -
	(8=) Eclipse	9 (10)	2.1% -
	(8=) First Comics	9 (10)	2.1% -
	(-) Kitchen Sink	9 (3)	2.1% +
	(10=) Now Comics	9 (9)	2.1% -
15=	(-) Comics Interview Group	8 (0)	1.9% +
	(16=) Jademan	8 (7)	1.9% =
17=	(16=) Adventure	7 (7)	1.7% -
	(13=) Aircel	7 (8)	1.7% -
	(13=) Fleetway Quality	7 (8)	1.7% -
20=	(13=) Dark Horse	6 (7)	1.4% -
	(-) Northstar	6 (1)	1.4% +
	(-) Revolutionary	6 (1)	1.4% +
	Others	102 (66)	24.4% +
	TOTAL US IMPORTS ON SALE DECEMBER	418 comics	
	Previous month total US imports	372	12.3% +

Cover Price totals:

The following chart looks at the total cost to the consumer to buy **one copy** of each of the comics titles being shipped from US publishers for sale to the direct sale specialist UK market during the current months.

Where hardback and paperback editions are simultaneously released, the cheaper edition is included only.

Bracketed figures show the publishers position on the previous month's imports.

(Dez Skinn)

	Publisher	Total cvr value		Share
1	(5) Eclipse	£83.05	(£40.20)	9.8% +
2	(2) DC Comics	£79.60	(£99.85)	9.4% -
3	(1) Marvel Comics	£60.60	(£118.00)	7.2% -
4	(13) Kitchen Sink	£43.80	(£13.20)	5.2% +
5	(4) Epic (Marvel)	£43.65	(£52.40)	5.1% -
6	(-) Greater Mercury	£42.25	(£6.50)	5.0% +
7	(7) Eternity	£40.85	(£27.40)	4.8% +
8	(3) Fantagraphics	£33.80	(£75.35)	4.0% -
9	(-) Tundra	£28.20	(- - -)	3.3% +
10	(9) Caliber	£28.05	(£21.75)	3.3% +
11	(-) Comics Interview	£27.75	(- - -)	3.2% +
12	(18) Viz	£19.95	(£9.50)	2.4% +
13	(8) Innovation	£17.95	(£19.35)	2.1% -
14	(-) Fantaco	£16.20	(- - -)	1.9% -
15	(10) Harvey & Rockomics	£14.85	(£19.95)	1.8% -
16	(20) Jademan	£14.50	(£8.55)	1.7% +
17	(6) Dark Horse	£13.25	(£32.75)	1.6% -
18	(-) Apple	£12.95	(- - -)	1.5% +
19	(16) Adventure	£11.75	(£10.35)	1.4% =
20	(10=) Aircel	£10.30	(£11.55)	1.3% -
	Others	£202.85	(£131.90)	24.0% +
	TOTAL DECEMBER IMPORT PRICES	£846.15		
	Previous month total prices	£761.60		11.1% +

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REVIEWS SECTION

It is the intention of ***Comics International*** *help you, the comic reader, keep abreast of the entire range of titles currently available through direct sale specialist shops and mail order companies. While few retailers would allow your to read all titles in stock before choosing your purchases, our reviews intend to point titles out to you that you might otherwise have ignored. Naturally, this section should be of even greater benefit to readers having to rely on mail order, as they only discover the quality of a new title after purchase!*

Review codes: *Titles general competitive performance 1 to 10. Specific issue's quality against previous issues: - - - to + + +*

In fairness and to be thorough, we use two ratings. The number following each review (on a scale of 0 - 10) is a quality comparison with other ***similar*** *titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare* ***Love & Rockets*** *to* ***Batman,*** *but treat each within the context of its own genre.*

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number, but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from - through to +++) if it has suddenly improved and is worth a look.

Reviewing panel: Sarah Bolesworth, Les Chester, Jonathan Farmer, Phil Hall, Peter Hayward-Brewer, Danny King, Skinny Melink, John Morrell, Peter C. Phillips, Simon Rogers, Dez Skinn and Win Wiacek

Publishers: *If your titles are missing, to rectify this in future issues be sure to include us on your mailing list (a!r)*

DC COMICS

ACTION 661 <+> (Stern & Mcleod + Breeding) Taking over a case for a wounded New York P.I., Plastic Man and Woozy Winks hit Metropolis on the trail of... they don't know what! Insofar as neither Plas nor Woozy are possessed of a full deck, the mixing of their crazy world with the more realistic confines of Superman's Metropolis works well, aided by the subtle changes in art style thus allowing Superman to view Woozy as a more human personality while Plas's distorted vision gives us the "Mad" style bullet holes. Kudos all round. (PCP) 8

ACTION 662 <+> (Stern & Mcleod) At last some progress on the marriage front. After Superman effortlessly disposes of Silver Banshee, Clark tells Lois his big secret. But tune in next issue - or beyond - for her reaction. (SM) 7

<+ -> If you have two villains who individually have given Superman a tough time then logic dictates that you should have a real humdinger of a yarn by teaming such villains together. That is the premise in forming an alliance between Blaze and Silver Banshee. Sadly the promise develops into a pedestrian damp squib making for who cares entertainment. Even so, this issue should become a much sought after collector's item as Clark discloses to Lois that he is really... aw, you guessed! (PCP) 6

ACTION 663 <+> (Stern & Mcleod) Fine Kerry Gammill cover, and inside the well-paced time travel storyline really begins to pick up steam. Mcleod's panels too have a particularly nice flow to them. (SM) 9

<++> Phase 2 of Superman's time travel adventure sees him departing 30th century Metropolis and cast back to 1943 and an almost meeting with the JSA which only a truly enigmatic Spectre manages to prevent. Good stuff, and a nice appetiser for the upcoming JSA mini-series. (PCP) 9

ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY 15 <+++> (Moore & Swan) This comic has improved tremendously. It's great to have classic artist Curt Swan doing a Supes book. The storyline is much improved as this issue veers away from emulating the appalling TV series and goes back to basics, Superboy with other heroes battling against an interesting super-villainess. (PHB) 9

<++> Another well drawn, well written story in a consistently excellent series, as Superboy is whisked into a dystopic future mercifully unshackled by the rest of DC continuity. I'm actually looking forward to the second part. (WW) 8

ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN 475 <++> (Jurgens & Thibert) The existence of Happyland, a front for Intergang to launder money, comes under threat from Sleeze, Killgrave and Toyman. Jurgens and Thibert combine to give a very Gil Kane feel to the art. (PCP) 7

ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN 476 <+> (Jurgens & Breeding) Okay action as a Punisher-Terminator type drops in from the future to retrieve Booster Gold. Meanwhile, Clark and Lois talk... (SM) 7

<++> Occasionally a story comes along that smells of instant classic. This is the case with Phase 1 of "Time and Time Again", right from the appearance of the Linear Man, his pursuit of Booster Gold, and Superman's meeting with the original members of the Legion of Super-Heroes. Miss this at your peril. (PCP) 9

ANGEL AND THE APE 1 (of 4) (Foglio & Wilson) It's wonderful to have these two back - a lot of fun and made even better with the inclusion of Dumb Bunny of the Inferior Five. If you like humourous comics, this one is for you. (PHB) 9

The original series was more lunacy than rib-tickling humour, with much time spent on parodying Marvel Comics and, in particular, Stan Lee. Times change and the humour here is tempered with a darker edge. Angel O'Day and Sam Simeon (along with the Inferior 5 - Dumb Bunny guests in this episode) have developed something of a cult following over the intervening years. What today's readers will make of it is anybody's guess, though a more open-minded series would have given more chance for the development of the characters to their full potential. If you like something different, give it a try. (PCP) 6

<-> Foglio fails to recapture the style and fun of his previous Plastic Man revival with a half-hearted attempt to insert A&A into the DC Universe. Is Sam a refugee from Gorilla City? Are Angel and Dumb Bunny really sisters? Are there really 3 more issues to go? (WW) 3

ANIMAL MAN 31 <+ -> (Milligan & Truog) Milligan's been at the helm for five issues now, and it's about time he resolved Buddy's current dilemma. Like Grant Morrison, Milligan seems to suffer from a surfeit of detached ideas, but at least this comic appears to have a definite direction. (SM) 6

ANIMAL MAN 32 <- -> (Milligan & Truog) A merciful conclusion to Milligan's 6-issue tenure which set off with a bang and degenerated into abject nonsense. By using a Dallas-style Shower/Dream sequence he does at least hand the book to the new creative team with something to work from. Other than that - disappointing and forgettable. (PCP) 3

ANIMAL MAN 33 <+> (T Veitch & Dillon) Morrison, Milligan, and now Veitch have all done some of their best work on this title. Veitch's Buddy is a bit more down to earth than his predecessor's, who had a tendancy to get a little carried away at times. Dillon, meanwhile, gets to really strut his stuff - where's he been all this time? (SM) 10

<- +> Once more back in the "real" world the focus of the book switches to more environmental concerns, which was originally the title's greatest asset. Stunning Bolland cover is an added bonus. (PCP) 8

<- -> New, new team, new, new start - complete with mysterious reality manipulators, endangered species, shadowy lurkers, Buddy's 'so-real' family and the mandatory 'Queasy Feeling of Something Not Quite Right', this is a comic you can justifiably club over its cute little head until it lies red and unmoving. (WW) 2

BATMAN 458 <++> (Grant & Breyfogle + Mitchell) "The Mark of Zorro" is a movie with great significance in the Batman annals, and it is again as romance blossoms for Jim Gordon. A violent conflict between Batman and a drug-pusher is an effective counterbalance - deliberately so - as, at the height of his elation, Gordon suffers a massive heart-attack. (PCP) 9

BATMAN 460 <++> (Grant & Breyfogle + Sale) Catwoman on the prowl, not knowing she is being led into a trap by another criminal mastermind Guest inker Tim Sale adds a new and exciting dimension to Breyfogles's pencils. (PCP) 8

BATMAN: THE DAILIES 1943-1944 Seldom seen but excellent daily newspaper strips collected into the first of three volumes. Surprisingly good insofar as such strips by their very nature tend to be stilted and repetitious having to constantly recap previous events. Not so here. Repetition was somehow kept to a minimum, possibly because the strips were written and drawn under the direct supervision of DC and not by the news syndicate as was usually the case. Some excellent mysteries highlighting Batman and Robin at their best, scripted variously by Bill Finger, Don Cameron & Al Schwartz, illustrated throughout by Bob Kane and Charles Paris (save for the last 26 pages pencilled by Jack Burnley). (PCP) 10

BATMAN 3-D (Byrne & Various) Arguably the best Bat-extravaganza of 1990. Some great artwork and superb printing make this a truly outstanding 3-D publication. The illustrations have all been composed with illusion in mind, throwing Batman's world off the page (or into it, on one occasion).

The book's real success though lies in the fact that it is just good fun. (SR) 10

BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT 15 <- -> (Moench & Gulacy) Odd title this. With its slick printing and rotating creative teams, it has so far promised much but delivered precious little.

This team clearly works together so frequently because they are so perfectly matched. Moench's laughable characterisation (loony shrink, tasty Mayor's daughter, vigilante ninja cop) and achingly predictable plotting are foiled superbly by Gulacy's two-dimensional draughtmanship. Best hoot, however, is Hugo Strange's physique - he dons a Batman costume (well, who wouldn't?) and suddenly he has a build that Arnold Schwarzenegger would envy. I think I prefered Slash Maraud, their six-parter about sadistic fluffy perverts from outer space. (JM) 4

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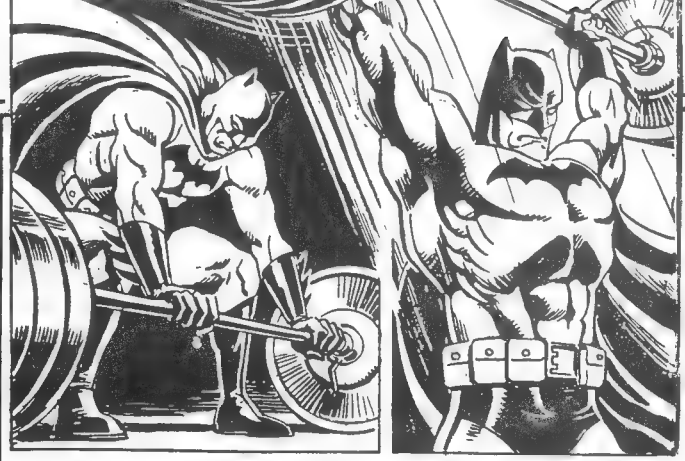

BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT 16 <+++> (O'Neil & Von Eeden + Braun + Lopez) Just when Batman is becoming old cowl, Legends ends its best run so far, and as an encore "Venom" is stunning. It has an oddly '70s feel, yet packs more of a punch than anything in Bats' past, very promising start. (PH) 8

<+ -> New creative team doesn't let the side down following the exceptional Moench/Gulacy "Prey" saga. This tale focuses on Batman's obsessive drive, though once again a great deal of credit must go to colourist Steve Oliff, who is singlehandedly changing the look of comics. (SM) 9

<+ -> After the well-received "Prey" it's back to the brooding and obsessive Dark Knight in "Venom". Something about it doesn't ring true, from Batman's uncharacteristic non-reaction to the uncaring parent matter-of-factly shrugging off the death of his daughter, to him knowingly and recklessly taking an untested drug to boost his strength. It's good, but... (PCP) 6

<+ -> Sad to see the end of one of the greatest Batman stories of recent times, one to measure all future Bat-epics against. (SM) 10

<++> Part 5 of "Prey". It's all been said - the best LDK story in the title's short history from a team of master-craftsmen. (PCP) 10

BOOKS OF MAGIC 2 <+ -> (Gaiman & Hampton) Mild but likeable and absorbing story as John Constantine takes young Tim Butler on his sorcerer's rounds. Hampton paints a pretty picture, and Gaiman's keen grasp of Constantine's character makes him a natural to try his hand at Hellblazer some day. (SM) 9

<++> After the disappointing opener, Gaiman kicks into gear as the original and truly enigmatic John Constantine introduces Tim Hunter to a number of DC's occult heroes and villains. If only Hellblazer was this good. (PCP) 9

CAPTAIN ATOM 49 <- +> (Bates & Weisman + M Adams) Courtroom drama has Plastique going on trial with none of the chaos of real-life proceedings - but it is a comic book and not a documentary. Bates & Weisman satisfyingly develop the relationship between Cap and the former terrorist. Cast-wise, Jean Loring and Amanda Waller provide able support. An improvement over recent issues despite the soap opera elements. (PCP) 6

CAPTAIN ATOM 51 <- +> (Puckett & Doran + Austin) Not exactly a Captain Atom story - indeed Cap's involvement is at best peripheral. Assistant editor Kelly Puckett introduces 'Pop' Richards, an elderly and reluctant hero with devastating powers. Could be a new star in the making if DC is prepared to run with the idea. Nice one. (PCP) 9

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN 1 (of 8 Loeb & Sale) Exceptional start to what promises to be an extraordinary series. Adding to previous stories rather than ignoring them, with four almost ordinary men in their fifties living in a mountain. For a fee you can visit them in this mountain home - just make sure you take along your Challenger lunch packs and Chall Chewy Bar as you pass through Challenger-ville. Walking bomb optional. And Tim Sale's art is excellent and imaginative. Buy it. (JF) 9

Four men living on borrowed time. Jack Kirby's forerunner of the Fantastic Four (sans powers) and one of DC's most successful titles - until time ran out. Efforts to revive the team over the last decade or so have generally failed to engender any interest from the reading public and it remains to be seen whether this attempt will meet with any more success. Loeb & Sale try valiantly to bring the Challengers into the '90s without negating the groundwork provided by Kirby & Wally Wood - and later by Bob Brown - even though much of the team's reputation is based on a lie, and is certainly of interest to old-time fans. "Not Bad" is an understatement - "Superb" would be gilding the lily. You need to know the Challs to appreciate what Loeb & Sale are trying to do, and that is the biggest drawback for newcomers. (PCP) 8

The old Challengers comic was an exciting and influential book, debuting in less jaded times, when America thrilled to such concepts as breaking the sound barrier, and putting a man into space. Later, at Marvel, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee transformed the Challengers into the Fantastic Four. Rather than try to recapture past glories, writer Loeb (who normally pens schlocky films) takes a more lighthearted approach, though it's too early yet to tell how this will work.(SM) 8

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN 2 <+> (Loeb & Sale) Following the destruction of Challenger-ville, the surviving team members go on trial for murder as more facts about the true origins are revealed. (PCP) 8

I get the feeling that many publishers are embarrassed with their histories - does that extend to their inventories? Here's yet another revival concerned with protecting copyrights and not creating memories. Heroism and honour are obviously debased concepts and admittedly a lot of '60s stories weren't all that great, but is a little dignity and integrity too much to ask for? After all, it's not as if any of these tired rehashes are big sellers, is it? This is yet another of those sad pastiches - and who is the artist? Does the real Tim Sale know someone's drawing this tripe and blaming him for it? (WW) 1

CHECKMATE 33 <- -> (Kupperberg & Morrissette + Machlan) An ignominious ending for DC's answer to SHIELD. It had possibilities that were never explored. (PCP) 2

DETECTIVE COMICS 625 <+ -> (Wolfman & Aparo + DeCarlo) Yet another deranged mass killer - Abattoir - makes his debut in so-so plot concerning a scheme to slay the mayoral candidate. Tired effort from the creative crew that panders to the 'kick everybody in the butt' mentality. Some DC comics are still for kids! (PCP) 2

DETECTIVE COMICS 626 <- - -> Wolfman & Aparo + DeCarlo) The Return of the Electrocutioner. Suspense, drama, plot? Nope, forget it. Batman seeks out a killer who (shock horror) kills thieves who thieve from thieves. The only interesting aspect is the hospitalisation of Jim Gordon following a heart attack. According to Denny O'Neil his recovery is not assured. (JF) 3

<++> With Jim Gordon in hospital, powers that be within the Gotham Police Dept and the Mayor's office plan to force his retirement. Deja vu? Quite! Wolfman used this self-same plot a decade or more ago and underscores the fact by re-introducing The Electrocutioner - albeit a new model. Time that Wolfman moved on to other things. (PCP) 4

DETECTIVE COMICS 627 <++> (Various) "The Case of the Chemical Syndicate" (Finger & Kane) must rank as the most reprinted Batman tale in history - and here it is again scant months after its reprise in Batman Archives, followed by the 30 anniversary re-tread (Friedrich & Brown + Giella) and two modern re-workings (Wolfman & Aparo + DeCarlo, and Grant & Breyfogle + Mitchell). The central characters and supporting cast including the members of the Syndicate - Lambert, Crane, Rogers and Stryker - remain constant throughout with only the motives and incidental occurences showing some variance. What could have been a tedious affair is instead an interesting and pleasurable reading experience, although how many more times in the future Batman must solve the same case without apparently realising it remains to be seen. Of the four versions, Breyfogle's visuals are the most diverting. Do take time out to read all the street signs/product labels etc. (PCP) 10

DOOM PATROL 40 <-> (Morrison & Case) A comic that's rapidly becoming unreadable as Morrison seems increasingly enamoured by his own endless and ultimately boring stream of weird concepts and ideas that apparently exist just to show us how creative he is. How much more of this aimless, pretentious rubbish does he think we can take? (SM) 3

<- -> (Morrisson & Case + McKenna) Unreadable garbage and storytelling (?) at its worst. (PCP) 1

DOOM PATROL 41 <-> (Morrison & Case) Looks like the end of another two-fisted adventure for the Doom Patrol. An angel transforms Eden from a physical reality into an abstract idea - or is it just the psychic projections of Lisa Krauss? Screw this symbolism and let's go home. (JF) 6

<- -> Final episode of the Rhea Jones chapterplay which makes some sense should anyone care to fight their way through the overly indulgent script. Suggested for "Mature Readers", but how mature do you have to be? (PCP) 2

<+> Because of the Bisley cover, I decided to look at this again and was agreeably surprised that the comic was entertaining. Why couldn't the creative team produce more material like this before? From previous issues I had come to the conclusion that Grant Morrison was suffering under two illusions: one, that comics fans "need to be educated"; and two, that there are no readers with any awareness of 20th century philosophy out there. (SB) 5

DR FATE 24 <++> (DeMatteis & McManus) Essentially a love story - narrated by The Phantom Stranger - which ties up two year's worth of continuity, paves the way for the return of Kent and Inza Nelson, and sees the departure of the entire creative and editorial teams. As a whole, the series has been complex and convoluting, with more lows than highs, but DeMatteis brings everything into focus with this final piece of the puzzle. That's a hint for those of you who have avoided the series to rush out and pick up the back issues - bearing in mind to read the run in one sitting. A tough act for the new team to follow. (PCP) 9

DR FATE 25 <+> (Messner-Loebs & Giarrano) The best thing about these change-of-direction issues is that they provide a good opportunity to pick up a book you haven't been reading. As such, this is worth a look. Messner-Loebs spins an interesting enough yarn, while Gairrano's got a

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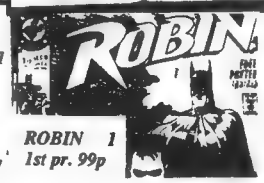

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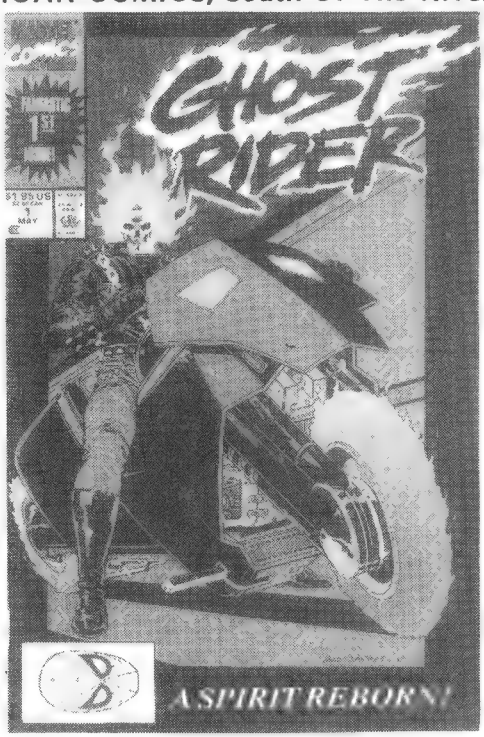

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good eye, and a clean, simple style. (SM) 7

A new Doctor Fate - with Inza Nelson finally taking her turn in the spotlight. Looks good - reads good. Worth following up. (PCP) 8

FLASH 47 <+ -> (Messner-Loebs & LaRocque + Marzan) Flash, Vixen & Pied Piper fail in their efforts to defeat Gorilla Grodd, so it's Rex the Wonder Dog to the rescue. But why are DC insisting on using the stupid Captain America spoof origin to explain Rex's longevity when the earlier DC Comics Presents version was 100% more plausible? (PCP) 6

FLASH 48 <+ -> (Messner-Loebs & LaRocque + Marzan) A lightweight episode concerning Flash's search for his mom (aided by Chuck and Elongated Man) and discovering things about her life he never knew. Vandal Savage returns - as does a new version of Immortal Man (this time as a girl!), while the lettercol shows groundswell support for returning Barry Allen to the Flash costume. (PCP) 5

GREEN ARROW 42 <+> (Grell + Cowan) A notch or two up from the last issue, as Ollie confronts some bitter truths, but this title's in the same predicament as its hero - lost in the woods somewhere. (SM) 6

<-> Continuation of the IRA storyline has Ollie unmasking the gun thief. Fairly interesting albeit standard fare. (PCP) 6

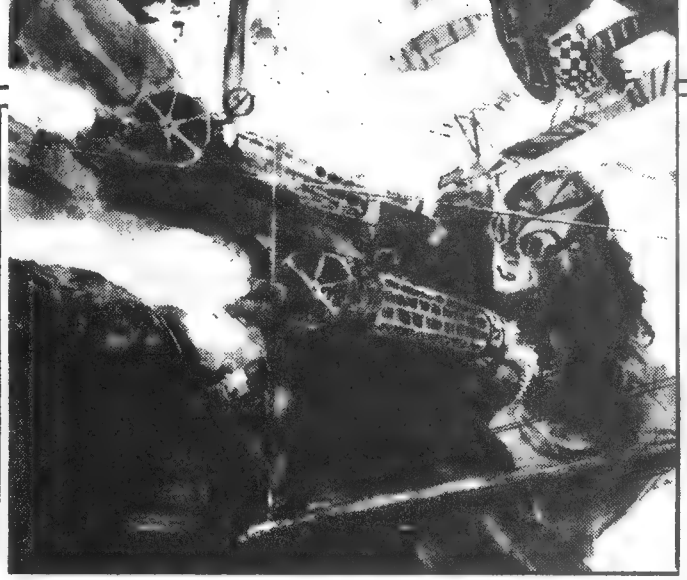
GREEN ARROW 43 <+ -> (Grell & Cowan + Wray) Our hero travels from Canada to Northern Ireland on the trail of an IRA terrorist. At one time they were friends, and now Green Arrow hunts the man who plans a very special killing for his last hurrah. As ever, Grell produces a good story with dialogue used only when necessary. (JF) 6

<-> Ollie travels to Northern Ireland in pursuit of the IRA terrorist. Mediocre to the point of boredom with Grell showing limited knowledge of the situation and flying in the face of well-documented security policy involving members of the Royal Family. Cowan & Wray again churn out some of the most appalling visuals possible. (PCP) 2

GREEN LANTERN 9 <++> (G Jones & Staton + Patterson) Semi-serious storyline begins in which Guy becomes official GL of sector 2814 and must solve the mystery behind G'Nort's belief that he too is a Lantern even though the Guardians claim to have no knowledge of him. Start of a 4-parter. (PCP) 8

GREEN LANTERN 10 <++> (G Jones & Staton + Patterson) Secrets behind G'Nort's possession of a power ring are revealed in quietly humourous episode. (PCP) 8

HAWK & DOVE 20 <- +> (Kesel & Maguire + Giordano + Clortho) Superior solo Dove Christmas adventure taking a sly swipe at the toy store mania for fads - this year being the turn of four reptiles. Great Batman jingle, too. (PCP) 9



ENEMY ACE: WAR IDYLL (Pratt) For once, a graphic novel worthy of name and format rather than an excuse to run a normal comic book story at an inflated price. Both horrifying and poignant, it is the story of how war affects the individual and the rationalising of why some survive when others die.

Pratt's prose is word perfect as Von Hammer and Vietnam veteran Edward Mannock compare their different wars and the slaughter carried out in the skies and fields on behalf of their countries, either through duty or honour.

Equally impressive is the painted art which by its varied use of colour captures the essence of the freedom of the skies and the claustrophobia of trench and tunnel warfare. A masterpiece in every sense. (PCP) 10

HAWK & DOVE 21 <- +> (Kesel & Erwin + Hanna) Four Female Furies come to Earth to play a particularly nasty game in an entertaining episode. (PCP) 7

HAWKWORLD 8 <+ -> (Ostrander + Truman & Nolan + Kwapisz) Relying more on character relationships than the pseudo-science fiction of the previous incarnation - a somewhat charmless Hawkman and Hawkwoman come to blows as Shayera determines to kill Byth. Off-key issue. (PCP) 5

HAWKWORLD 9 <+ +> (Ostrander + Truman & Nolan + Kwapisz) Hawkman's investigation into the circumstances surrounding the 'death' of Byth marks a turning point in his relationship with Shayera. Truman's last issue. (PCP) 7

HAWKWORLD 10 <+> (Ostrander & Nolan + Kwapisz) Shayera returns to Thanangar and a chance meeting with her grandmother. Slow moving but enjoyable. (PCP) 7

HELLBLAZER 38 <- -> (Delano & Pugh) Second part of "Boy's Games" storyline fails to sustain the tension or terror of the first half, while further exposure to Pugh's rough, slipshod art reveals it to be entirely unsuitable for this comic. (SM) 6

<-> The slaughterhouse story concludes. No redeeming features whatsoever. (PCP) 0

HELLBLAZER 39 <+ -> (Delano & Pugh) I can think of several titles where Pugh's unusual sloppy style would work to an advantage, though this isn't one of them. Delano, meanwhile, seems to have run out of inspiration as he keeps on covering the same ground over and over again. There's a new creative team on the horizon, and they couldn't come at a better time. (SM) 6

<-> Constantine discovers that he had a twin brother who died at birth. Who cares? Downbeat and thoroughly depressing. (PCP) 2

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA 47 <++> (Giffen + DeMatteis & Medley + Beatty) The constantly grinning and eternally optimistic General Glory brings his overpowering sense of patriotic duty to the League in marvellous send-up of star-spangled heroes. Plus the JLA adopt a dog - which is no doubt leading up to a meeting of sorts with the JLE's cat. (PCP) 8

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA 48 <+-> (Giffen & DeMatteis & Medley) Part 3 of the 5-part "Glory Bound" story wherein the world's greatest comic book hero General Glory visits the Justice League, hotly persued by his aging arch enemy and his giant Nazi robot. A well below average League story with well below average art. Only the covers by Adam Hughs show what might have been. (JF) 5

<+ -> A giant Hitler-lookalike robot seeks the death of General Glory as the parody begins to flag. Some nice touches but not enough to make it memorable, save for the wrong reasons. (PCP) 5

JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE 22 <+ -> (Giffen + G Jones & Rogers + Marzan) Crazy goings-on as two London toughs demand a ransom for the return of the JLE's cat and get more than they bargained for. Over the top histrionics from Power Girl and the most appalling art. Should have been good - but isn't. (PCP) 4

JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE 23 <++> (Giffen + G Jones & Sears + Elliot) An issue chock-full of surprises - well alright - one surprise concerning the origin and secret ID of The Crimson Fox providing cover-to-cover entertainment. (PCP) 8

JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE 24 <+> (Giffen + G Jones & Sears + Elliot) Giant worms? Not as trite an idea as it sounds and expertly constructed. Pt 2 of Crimson Fox's story. (PCP) 8

JUSTICE LEAGUE QUARTERLY 2 <-> (Giffen + DeMatteis & Elliot + Patterson) When you get a character called Kirtan Rodd, and two Lords of Order named Jakk and St'nn, you know you are not in for a serious story. What you do get is yet another parody on the Galactus/Silver Surfer theme and an interminable waste of 56 pages. Of more interest is the 17-page back-up starring Fire & Ice as they take on the out-of-retirement Captain Cold and Heatwave, and which saves the issue from being a total bust. (PCP) 5

L.E.G.I.O.N.'91 23 <++> (Grant & Fern + Rayner + DeMulder) Strange issue which starts with the funeral of Lydea Mallor and then goes on to explain what became of the Durlan - which everybody who reads Legion of Super-Heroes knew already. (PCP) 8

L.E.G.I.O.N.'91 25 <+++>(Grant & Kitson) It's good to have Barry Kitson back on the art chores. There's strong character interaction and a good plot build-up, despite the inclusion of the objectionable Lobo. Stealth fights for her life, and the scene is set for an epic battle next issue. (PHB) 8

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES 15 <++> (Giffen + Bierbaum & Giffen + Peterson +Garzon + Gordon) Hard-hitting episode, hindered by a mish-mash of art styles, as the Khund invasion of the United Planets begins. More physical and emotional agony for Shrinking Violet whose life has been anything but easy since this series began. (PCP) 8

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES 16 <++> (Bierbaum + Giffen & Peterson + Garzon & Giffen + Gordon) Brutally violent and a far cry from the optimistic LSH of old. Not to be missed. (PCP) 9

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES 17 <++> (Giffen & Bierbaums + Peterson Exciting and rather savage wind up to the Khund war. Competant artwork from Brandon Peterson, with beautiful colour by Tom McCraw. The book is starting to regain the real "Legion" feel about it again. A good solid read. (PHB) 7

<++> Final battle with the Khunds marred by uninspired art. Of more worth is the tail-ender which reveals the fate of the Tornado Twins - the descendants of Barry Allen. (PCP) 7

LOBO 4 <-> (Giffen + Grant & Bisley) Sick storyline with an even sicker ending. (PCP) 3

MISTER MIRACLE 24 <- +> (Moench & Hooper + Dvorak) Shilo's dreams are invaded by the Lump, an old time Mr M villain in above average story. Fun is provided as Barda tries out for an all-girl wrestling team. (PCP) 6

MISTER MIRACLE 25 <- -> (Moench & Phillips + Marcos) Minor laughs as Barda becomes

a female wrestler but doesn't understand why the fights have to be rehersed. (PCP) 4

NAZZ 2 <+ -> (T. Veitch & Talbot) New Age superhero defeats the baddies by converting them. Veitch's tale slows down a bit, but continues to be a pleasant surprise, and Talbot's grown since his awkward, early Luther Arkwrights. (SM) 8

NEW TITANS 73 <+ -> (Wolfman & Grummett + Vey) Yay! The obnoxious Danny Chase gets killed! Hang about, though - we don't see the body - oh no!! Plus the debut of the mysterious Phantasm. Not bad. (PCP) 8

NEW TITANS 74 <+ -> (Wolfman & Grummett + Vey) Yet another anti-social and short-tempered character with feline powers (Pantha) makes her debut as the revamp continues. Yawn! (PCP) 5

ROBIN 2 <-> (Dixon & Lyle + Smith) Lady Shiva to the rescue - but only on behalf of Robin and Clyde Rawlins. The reader is left to struggle alone through the seen-it-all-before rubbish. (PCP) 3

ROBIN 3 <-> (Dixon & Lyle + Smith) King Snake's efforts to acquire a consignment of Yershina Bacillus provides the excuse for another all-fight episode in this so far disappointing series. (PCP) 3

ROBIN 4 <-> (Dixon & Lyle + Smith) Lots of frenetic running around and martial arts action in going nowhere plot. (PCP) 2

SANDMAN 23 (Gaiman & Jones) Kelly Jones keeps getting better and better, and Malcolm Jones seems his perfect inker. Kudos also to colourist Daniel Vozzo, and of course Neil Gaiman, whose slowly unfolding tale of a Eurydice-like journey to Hell here takes an unexpected twist. (SM) 9

<++> Well constructed yarn in which Sandman arrives in Hell only to discover that Lucifer has closed it down. If Hell is deserted, where does everyone go? (PCP) 10

SANDMAN 24 <+ -> (Gaiman & Jones) Gaiman's tale of Dream's journey to Hell is unfolding too slow for my liking, though Jones' striking pencils (aided by the talents of inker P Craig-Russell and colourist Daniel Vozzo) thus far pick up the drag. (SM) 8

<++> Having become custodian of the keys to Hell, what else can Sandman expect but visitations from a variety of gods, angels and demons seeking to acquire the keys for their own nefarious purposes. (PCP) 10

SGT ROCK SPECIAL 11 (Various) Reprints the first Haunted Tank story (mistakenly credited to Russ Toth) in which everyone is reminded that Jeb Stuart's name is actually Smith, a detail overlooked when Jeb makes modern day appearances in Suicide Squad. Good stuff (Kanigher & Heath). Other reprints include a Rock/Johnny Cloud team-up (Kanigher & Kubert), Gunner, Sarge and Pooch (Regan & Cruz), and the classic "Dirty Job" (Toth). As of next issue the title reverts to monthly publication which would indicate more people are buying this book than actually admit it. ((PCP)8

SHADE 9 <+ -> (Milligan & Bachalo) Milligan can take a long time to get to wherever it is that he's going, but more often than not it's a fun, at times fascinating story. Artist Chris Bachalo, meanwhile, has emerged as one of comicdom's premier artists, and is well-served by inker Mark Pennington. Anyone who doubts that DC is visually light years ahead of Marvel needs only to compare Shade to almost anything the House of Lee is producing these days. (SM) 9

SHADOW STRIKES 15 <++> (G Jones & Barreto) The Shadow and his team go toe-to-toe with the Chicago Mob in good old fashioned crime comic. (PCP) 8

STARMAN 31 <- -> (Strazewski & Hoover + Hanna) Part 2 of "Seduction". Mediocre and predictable. Strazewski seems to be having difficulty in finding suitable opponents for his hero this time: magically enlarged hornets! Either Strazewski goes or the book does. (PCP) 1

STARMAN 32 <- -> (Strazewski & Hoover + Hanna) Lovestruck Starman continues to be beguiled by the manipulative Alicia. Another who-cares issue with the main threat (apart from boredom) coming from a giant lizard - a.k.a. comic book cliche #62. (PCP) 1

STAR TREK 16 <- -> (Strazcynski & Purcell + Starr) A story from the years of the original 5-year mission concerning a dying world and an alien linked to the planet's soul. Uninspired and far from original. Nice cover. (PCP) 2

STAR TREK 17 <- +> (Weinstein & Hooper + Dvorak) Neutral planet which trades with both Klingons and the Federation comes under threat from mysterious enemy. Excellent. (PCP) 8

STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION 16 <- -> (Friedman & Marcos) A mysterious eruption of matter and energy disables the Enterprise and various members of the crew begin to act strangely - for the umpteenth time. Passable but lacks soul. (PCP) 5

STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION 17 <- +> (Friedman & Penders + Marcos) Disabled Enterprise poses a problem for the Romulans who are unsure whether it is a Federation ploy to lure them into a lethal trap. Enjoyable episode. (PCP) 7

SUICIDE SQUAD 49 <++> (Ostrander + Yale & McDonnell + Isherwood) The Squad sets out to rescue Babs (Oracle) Gordon as the lady herself sets a trap for her would-be killer. Everything clicks just right; the completely-in-control Amanda Waller, the terrified heroine, the sadistic Cliff Carmichael. A

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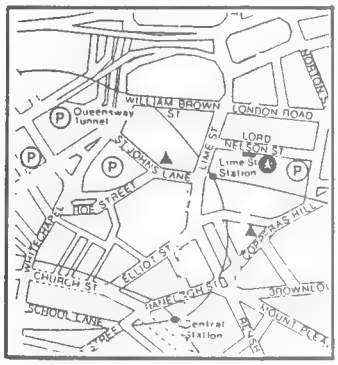

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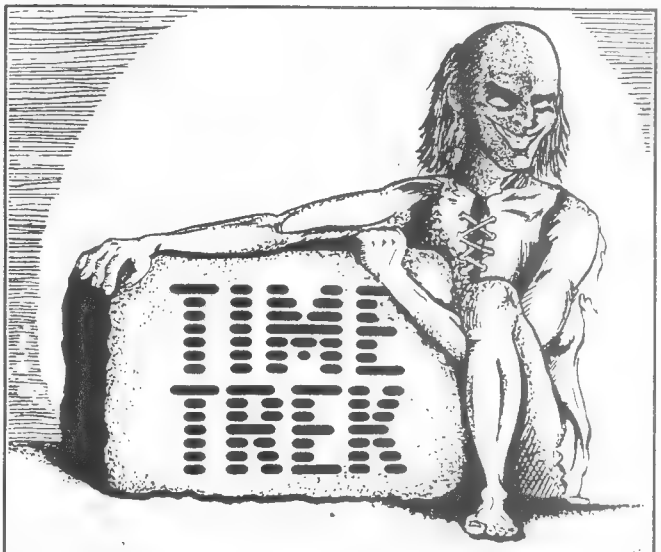

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classy thriller behind a superb Breyfogle cover.(PCP) 9

SUICIDE SQUAD 50 <+ -> (Ostrander + Yale & Isherwood + McDonnell + Miehm + Kesel) Not many people expected this title to last, but here we are at the half-century with a tale that harks back to the earlier "Brave & Bold" team and the repercussions today when Rick Flag's son is kidnapped. Entertaining, but the resurrection of some dead foes is a bit of a downer. (PCP) 7

SUICIDE SQUAD 51 <++> (Ostrander + Yale & McDonnell + Isherwood) Someone else starts using Floyd Lawton's lost Deadshot suit which doesn't sit too well with the Squad's resident "death-wish" killer. What he does about it is the basis for another well-executed issue. (PCP) 8

SUPERMAN 52 <++> (Ordway & Gammill + Janke) Toxic-waste landfills form backdrop for the return of Terra-Man in thoughtful yarn that places emphasis on plot rather than on super-hero fisticuffs. (PCP) 8

SUPERMAN 53 <+ -> (Ordway) Timely story involving Arab despots and corrupt American generals, though both story and art seem a bit lazy and unchallenging. The real interest is in the Clark-Lois camp anyway, though one fears that DC might drag it out forever. (SM) 6

<++> Timely episode given the Gulf War as Superman reluctantly escorts deposed Qurac tyrant Marlo to the US for trial. (PCP) 9

TEMPUS FUGITIVE 3 <+> (Steacy) Late entry in the Neal Adams "Blow that Deadline" awards this issue is a major let-down. Lots of pretty colours and a fast pace can't disguise the fact that nothing has really happened. Disappointing. (WW) 4

WONDER WOMAN 52 <++> (Perez & Martin + Nowlan) For a time, this series began to slip steadily towards typical super-hero fare, and lost a good number of readers in the process. This trend has now been reversed, placing more emphasis on the mythological base and, more importantly, Diana's relationship with her supporting cast. Some of the best episodes have excluded any signs of physical violence and this issue is a prime example of that tenet, concentrating as it does on several cast members realising how Diana has affected their lives and their need to distance themselves from her, if only temporarily. That characters experience these feelings simultaneously and which would normally stretch coincidence to the breaking point, is of course paramount to the tale Perez needs to tell and within such constraints works well. (PCP)9

WONDER WOMAN 53 <++> (Perez & Thompson + Tanghal) Lots of questions and very few answers in intruiging new opener which has Diana suffering nightmares but which may just be a nightmare experienced by Hermes. And how does Pariah (from Crisis) fit into it all? A good read from start to cliff-hanger. (PCP) 8

WORLD WITHOUT END 1 (Delano & Higgins) Billed as the "Battle of the Sex War" this is a far cry from the Rock Hudson and Doris Day encounters of the Fifties. It's a fantasy set on a sentient and fleshy planet where the sexes coexist in mutual fear and disgust.

I consider Jamie Delano to be one of the finest writers in comics, which makes wading through indulgent tosh like this all the more depressing. John Higgins' art is lovingly painted, each page a montage of fantasy pulp covers, but I feel this standard of illustration would suffice for the cover. To me it's less compelling than conventional comic art. Remember comics? (JM) 5

Wordy, nonsensical, pretentious pap trying to be something significant. (PCP) 1

EPIC COMICS

ALIEN LEGION: ON THE EDGE 3 <+ -> (Dixon & Stroman + Farmer) I've always been an admirer of this book, but I have to admit that they copped out. The pre-launch hype of the new Nomad Squadron book fizzled out like a damp squib. Lovely art, but one gets the impression that Carl Potts got cold feet at the last moment and asked Chuck Dixon to make some not so permanent changes. (PH) 6

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS 5 <++> (Schultz) Another luxuriantly visualised bout of repressed sexual excitement from Hannah Dundee and Jack Tenrec.

During a hazardous fishing-trip the real reason for Hanna'a prolonged diplomatic visit is revealed - the mass of knowledge stored in the secret underground library, which she believes could be the key to the development of her people. Plus great back-up strip, "Dog's Life". (SB) 8

ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN (Miller & Varley) While the format is that of an upmarket Topper annual, Frank Miller's social observation and eye for balletic stop-motion is the equal of anything in the industry while the drawing has an unmistakably European texture.

If anything lets the book down, it's Miller's all too frequent forays into the dreamscape of Murdoch's unstable mind, but there are some great Miller moments as well, reminiscent of his best work - notably those that allow for his narrative skill.

Worth a tenner, cloth bound or no. (JM) 8

GROO THE WANDERER 76 <+> (Aragones & Evanier) I've not read Groo in ages, so it's with mixed feelings that I find that it hasn't changed

one little bit. This issue he manages to clumsily move mountains and change the course of mighty rivers. Still a good series for the casual reader. (WW) 6

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS 2 <+ -> (Evanier & Spiegle) Enjoyable glimpse of the dark side of Hollywood by insider Evanier, adequately pencilled by Dan Spiegle. Even better than the main feature though is Evanier's hilarious six-page account of how he almost became a TV weatherman. (SM) 8

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS 3 <- -> (Evanier & Spiegle) Having created some good characters, Evanier's now letting them go to waste. Further, the weak story here - more like a sermon, really - only makes Spiegle's shortcomings more apparent. Disappointing, coming so quickly after such a promising start. (SM) 5

LAST AMERICAN 3 <+ -> (Grant & Wagner + McMahon) McMahon's pencils perfectly portray the stark, post-apocalyptic world so stunningly presented here. A timely tale. (SM) 9

LAST AMERICAN 4 <+ -> (Wagner & Grant + McMahon) Is there life on earth? Will Bert the Turtle ever shut up? What happened to the surviviros who hid in the undergound bunker? Hope...or twilight? All these questions and more answered in this thrilling conclusion to the long-awaited series. Well worth the wait. (JF) 9

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHOLLY AND FLYTRAP 1 (of 3; Suydam) A glorious amalgam of ideas, styles, and genre traditions culled from shamelessly diverse sources (How about "How To Get Ahead in Advertising" for shameless!) with the worldy and the fantastic woven around strongly empathetic central characters. This comic's got everything, sex, violence, anti-heroes, humour, social comment, lovely art... let's hope that the redoubtable Arthur Suydam can keep up the quality of output over the two remaining issues. (SB) 9

MARVEL

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 1 (L. Simonson & Bogdanove) This comic ties in with an American presidential anti-illiteracy campaign, and is intended to demonstrate to inner city kids in particular the joys and pleasures of reading. The irony is that it is terribly written itself, and is certainly less stimulating and interesting than most any issue of the various Spider-Man titles. The premise is engaging enough, as a baddie callled the Troglodyte chases Spidey and three street-wise kids through the exotic settings of novels such as the **Jungle Book** and **War of the Worlds**. The fault rather lies in Simonson's appallingly dull and dry prose. Getting through it is a major effort. Curiously, Bogdanove's art is much cleaner and bolder than his X-Factor work, which at least partly compensates for the dreadful prose. Typically, Marvel charges retailers for this title, while suggesting that they give it away to their customers. (SM) 4

BARBIE 1 (Unknown) Ex-Spider artist John Romita Sr. provides a functional cover and it is interesting to see Marvel US adopt the British tradition of free gifts. Reviewing the comic itself is impossible however, since it comes in a collector's item sealed bag and unbagging it would reduce the value. (SR)

BARBIE 1 (Tusiani & Wiltshire + Lucas) O.K., I relented and ripped the bag open. I now have my Barbie Pink Card (no. 4039 256 710) which means that I am "entitled to hours of enjoyment reading Barbie Comics". I am also "encouraged to send in letters and fashion drawings to the **Barbie** Comics mailing address".

The title itself is functional, but the comic equivalent of TV-am. I think I'll stick to **Bunty**. (SR) 3

BARBIE FASHION 1 (Unknown) Faced with the prospect of not being able to read **Barbie** 1, I asked my friendly comic dealer to order another copy - one I could unbag.

However, his distributor sent him this companion title which is bagged as well...

Having now requested additional copies of both titles, I only hope that I won't get lumbered with a baged copy of **Barbie versus Wolverine**. (SR)

BARBIE FASHION 1 (Trusiani & Cool + Drake + Lucas + Mushynsky) Another bag open (Spider-Man 1, next!) and I can't help but feel that this is the most blatant advertisment I've ever seen.

The doll isn't mentioned once, but the corporate logo pops up again and again. All the activities, like how to make a jewellery box, are Barbie activities and the emphasis is on never-ending wardrobes.

The squalor of some DC Thompson strips becomes positively desirable.

It would be nice to think that Marvel could come up with a girls' comic without resorting to marketing support tools. (SR) 3

CAPTAIN AMERICA GOES TO WAR AGAINST DRUGS 1 (David & Velluto) Another well-intentioned but poorly executed public service comic. Here space aliens deal drugs to a young athlete cracking under the pressure of potential stardom. Hardly your typical drug abuser that everyone can identify with. Nor will Captain America pop up in real life to give a pep talk, as he does here, but at least the kid learns a lesson. (SM) 5

CONAN 241 <++> (Thomas & Hartle) Todd McFarlane's dynamic cover heralds the welcome return of Roy Thomas, who scripted all those brilliant early Conans. One difference, though, is that in those days Thomas worked with

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two successive artistic heavyweights - Barry Smith and John Buscema, both at the top of their game. Hartle does a decent enough job, but he's just not in their league. Still, it's been a long time since this comic's been any good, and Thomas is off to a pretty strong start here.(SM)8

DARKHAWK 1 (Fingeroth & Manley) Sort of an urban Rom, with a touch of **Omega the Unknown**, which shouldn't surprise anyone since Marvel seem incapable of producing anything original these days.

This is your standard "young Marvel hero is born" issue. No doubt he'll soon be visited by the likes of Ghost Rider, Wolverine, the Surfer, and all the other super sales boosters. Fingeroth and Manley do their jobs here, little more. (SM) 5

ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN (Miller & Varley) Excellent stuff. Visually the most impressive book around at present, successfully straddling the chasm between comfortable familiarity and innovation. Miller's retro-continuity expands on Matt Murdoch's obsessive nature. Bodes well for the forthcoming **Man Without Fear** graphic novel. (SR) 10

EXCALIBUR 34 <- - -> (Claremont & Wagner) Jolly hockey sticks! This is a rum do! Shadowcat and the St Triniates put on a show to save the old school. As a satire of a satire it fails dismally. (Remembering that Excalibur is actually an American comic, I canvassed a couple of ex-pat Americans on this tale. The joke was lost on them and explaining it didn't help). (SR) 2

EXCALIBUR: WEIRD WAR III <- -> (Higgins & Morgan + Thyme) The only weird thing about this war is how Marvel came to publish it - and in graphic novel form, no less. The infinite earths of Captain Britain can be fun, but it helps considerably when the paradox has been fully considered. The concept in itself is not interesting. There are some nice ideas lurking inside this tale, but nothing is really established, let alone developed.

Calling the storytelling disjointed is polite in the extreme and while not every graphic novel need be a War and Peace, the format should be a guarantee of competence at least. (SR) 0

FANTASTIC FOUR 349 (Simonson & Adams) An artist like Art Adams or stablemate Marc Silvestri can make almost anything enjoyable, though in the end Simonson manages to pull his contrived storyline together well enough. (SM) 7

INCREDIBLE HULK 378 <-> (David & Jaaska) Cutesy fill-in story provides a couple of laughs, though it interrupts a particularly good storyline. Jaaska's done nice work in the past, though it's too cartoony here. (SM) 6

INCREDIBLE HULK 379 <+++> (David & Keown + Farmer) It wasn't quite what I expected and it all seemed to make perfect sense. Bruce thinks he's Arnold Schwarzenegger, and who's going to argue with him? Same superlatives as previous reviews, and a big yes vote for Mark Farmer's inks, now Britain can smile on Greenie again. (PH) 10

<+> The right team on the right book, and the most fun the Hulk has been in a long time. (SM) 10

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS 72 AND 73 (Various) The Big Story, of course, is the long waited 13-part origin of Wolverine, as presented by Barry Smith whose pencils can still stun 20 years on. Unfortunately, his writing's not as good, particularly in the peculiar format Marvel has chosen for one of their hottest tales ever. By releasing one tiny chapter at a time, Marvel sacrifices cohesion and coherency, while character development is all but invisible. Smith doesn't make it any easier by writing in the heavy-handed style by which Todd McFarlane rode to riches. On top of that, he's a lousy colourist. Perhaps it'll all come together in the inevitable trade paperback, but it certainly doesn't work here. (SM) 5

NEW MUTANTS 100 <++ -> (Liefeld & Nicieza) Sadly the last issue of what has become a very exciting comic book. In its run it's had some great high points and some very low points. Now it really gets into gear, it gets cancelled. Fortunately it re-emerges in June as X-Force, same members and the same creative team. Liefeld's art can be unwieldy at times, Cable's shoulders get bigger and bigger as his feet get smaller. The characters have potential and the story flows well. (PHB) 7

<-> "Oh goody," said the Professional Comics Fan. "Another complete set" as he double-bagged his 15th copy. Yet somewhere in his ink-soaked brain a nagging voice sounds. "If it's a last issue, why doesn't it have an end?" Does it have to be double-sized and twice the price to bring in second rate characters they have to re-introduce in X-Force 1 anyway? The P C F brain just thinks reptile thoughts and carries on bagging. My thoughts are unprintable. (WW) 1

SPIDER-MAN 8 <- - +> (McFarlane) Nowhere near as stunning as its DC Dark Knight counterpart - in all departments, but I don't know, this seems to have something. Probably predictability. It's the best issue so far, though, worth a look. (PH) 6

THOR 428 <+ -> (DeFalco & Frenz) Less demanding fans might enjoy this all-out battle issue, but this remains a tired and directionless title. (SM) 5

WOLVERINE ANNUAL 2 (Davis & Neary) Hi-falutin' gibberish wherein some highly advanced beings enlist Wolverine to kill some of their renegade brethren. He does, and they

thank him, and once again mankind is saved from a horrible fate. As daft as it sounds, and Neary's done better too. (SM) 4

WOLVERINE 35 <+> (Hama & Silvestri) Proof that not all Marvel's mutant books are mindless juvenile piffle. Highly enjoyable tale has Logan and Alpha Flight's ace character Puck tangled up in the Spanish Civil War along with their good buddy Ernest Hemingway. Hama spins a great yarn, and Silvestri's clean, brisk pencils are the equal of almost anyone's. (SM) 10

WOLVERINE 36 <+ -> (Hama & Silvestri) Silvestri's pencils are a delight. His use of strong, simple lines, and the stunning composition of his panels recall, and perhaps exceed, the best work of John Buscema - his apparent mentor. Hama is his prose equal here, as Logan, Puck, and Ernest Hemingway and friends get further involved in the Spanish Civil War, with Lady Deathshrike, in collusion with the Nazis, hot on their trail. Great fun. (SM) 10

WOLVERINE 37 <+ -> (Hama & Silvestri) Silvestri's art is far superior to any of Marvel's fan favourites, and combined with Hama's engaging and inventive storyline, this is one of Marvel's best current titles. (SM) 10

WOLVERINE 38 <-> (Hama & Silvestri) Lighthearted tale is a bit of a let-down following the fine three-parter, though it's enjoyable enough on its own terms. Silvestri's pencils are so strong, sure and clean, that he could probably illustrate the 'phone book and make it an exciting read.(SM)8

X-FACTOR 64 <+ -> (Simonson & Portacio) Iceman fights Cyborgs for his lady-love, detailed artwork - if a little rushed in places. An issue-length fight scene with predictable ending. (PHB) 8

X-MEN 275 <+++> (Claremont & Lee + Williams) Giant - sized issue that brings it all together - striking fold-out cover, wonderful art by Jim Lee. Featuring The Star-jammers, The Imperial Guard and the return of Professor X, but is he now friend or foe? A real cliff-hanger ending. (PHB) 8

<+> This wasn't really as bad as I feared it was going to be. Nice drawing, lots of action, but I pity any fool who starts his/her collection with this issue. So many mutants, so little sense. By the way, is a gatefold cover cheaper or more expensive than normal? There is an extra page of art to print, but you can charge for 2 inside front cover ads. (WW) 5

US INDEPENDENTS

ACHILLES STORM / RAZAMATAZ 1 (Aja Blu)Plots and/or characterisations are non-existent as action-violence-martial arts provide poor excuse for page after page of female crotch shots, despite being written and drawn by a woman (Sandra Chang).

Sharing the book is "Razmataz" (Beachum) which throws story structure out of the window and relies solely on foul language and boob groping to augment the plot (if one can be found). Labelled for mature audiences - produced by immature creators. (PCP) 0

BLACK CAT 3 (Recollections) Hollywood movie star Linda Turner again dons the garb of the crimefighting Black Cat in a 4-story collection (culled from old Harvey comics) two of which have western settings. A cut above standard fare with the movie studio backdrop providing a variety of scenarios (illoed mainly by Lee Elias) (PCP) 5

CAMELOT ETERNAL 3 <+> (Calafiore & Reid) The continuing story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table after Mordred's defeat. Sir Launcelot has resumed his love affair with Queen Gwynevere and, troubled by nightmares, the King leaves Camelot to seek help. Also includes an excellent interlude with Merlin standing on the brink of Hell. Good story and very nice artwork. (JF) 7

CAT CLAW 2 (Eternity; Kerac) Three average adventures featuring the European feline super-heroine. Could be better and not even fishnets provide sufficient reason for parting with cash. (PCP) 2

CRYING FREEMAN BK 2 4 (Viz Premiere; Koike & Ikegami) A fight to the death between Freeman and the lady assassin Kitche is the focal point of the story, skillfully blending violence with storytelling. (PCP) 10

DANGEROUS TIMES 1 (Evolution; Various) There is quite an acceptable comic lurking behind a truly awful cover (by Kaluta, of all people). The Druid Vidorix is a charming pseudo-Celtic tale, though the back-up "Belegean Days" makes little sense. Both suffer from extremely crude lettering. (SR) 5

DANGEROUS TIMES 2 <+ -> (Evolution; Various) Writer Margie Spears and artist Vince Mielcarek seem a bit more confident, resulting in greater clarity for the SF strip Belegean Days. A change of artist robs Vidorix of some charm though and Murphy (Superman) Anderson is recruited to provide the awful cover for this issue. (SR) 5

DJANGO & ANGEL 5 (Caliber; Avenall & Clave) A crooked financier and a truck hijack provide the latest case for Interpol agent Django Hardt in routine melodrama. (PCP) 4

DUCKIMAN 1 (Dark Horse; Peck) Mildly amusing comic, though not nearly as clever or as quirky as it thinks it is. Nor do Peck's sketchy pencils compare favourably with the likes of obvious influences like Beyer, Deitch and Sala. (SM) 6

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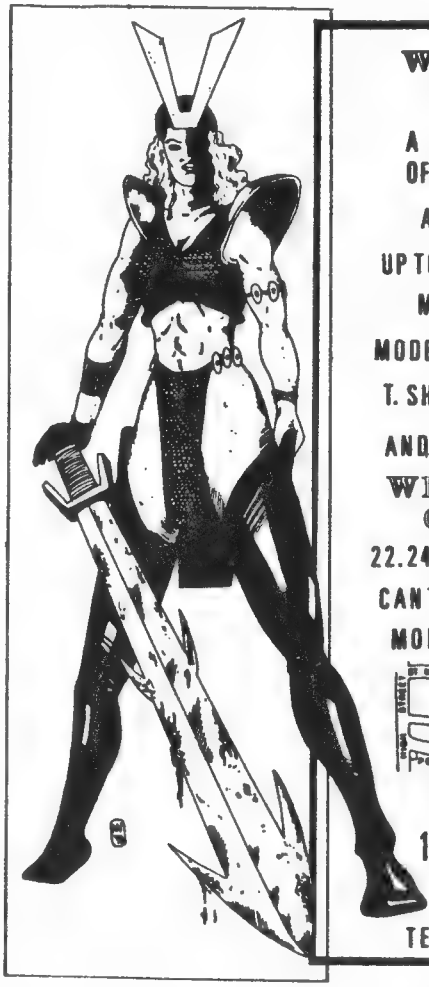

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EIGHTBALL 5 <+ -> (Fantagraphics; Clowes) You could say that Daniel Clowes is the David Lynch of comicdom, except that Clowes is a lot weirder. If you haven't tried this comic yet, you're in for a surprise - there's nothing else like it. (SM) 10

FEM FORCE 31 (AC; Black & The Count + Heike and Levins & Nadeau + Dell) The golden-age revival material again takes a back seat to retroactively - and by way of inventory material - present a Dragonfly episode involving a clone of Captain Paragon and resulting in a below average issue. (PCP) 3

FEM FORCE: NIGHT OF THE DEMON (AC; Staffers + Heike & Nadeau + Heike) A one-off special originally planned for Halloween release that has the girls of the Femforce possessed in turn by a demon. Lots of frenetic action masks a flimsy plot. (PCP) 3

GOOD GIRL ART QUARTERLY Fall (AC) Unnumbered third issue in the series which focuses on The Phantom Lady (with 2 yarns from her days at Fox Comics by Matt Baker). An interesting article (Black) looks at this heroine's diverse career from, and through, her days with Quality, Fox, Ajax, IW, Paragon/AC (when she became Blue Bulleteer and Nightveil) and ending with her DC/Freedom Fighters appearances. A quality lady in a foxy issue. (PCP) 8

GUNHED 1 (Viz Select; Asamiya) The sub-title is "Gun Unit/ Heavy Elimination Device" which should tell you what this is all about. Yep, robots - Japanese style - based on a live action movie. In colour, too. (PCP) 8

HARD BOILED 2 <+ -> (Dark Horse; Miller & Darrow) More pages, more money, and more of the same mess. Miller and Darrow revel and wallow in endless blood, gore, violence, mutilation and destruction like two pigs in shit. But what's the point of it all? This is like a moronic hi-tech Rambo/car crash movie. The only fun to be had is in picking through the background details in Darrow's intricate, often stunning panels. Frank Miller's recent output ranges from the sublime (Elektra Lives Again) to the idiotic (this). Basically a rip-off. (SM) 3

HOTEL HARBOUR VIEW (Viz; Sekikawa & Taniguchi) One-off album featuring two tales of female assassins with a depth and quality which belies their seemingly simplistic narratives. Highly recommended. (PCP) 10

JIZZ (Fantagraphics; Scott Russo) When I was in the sixth form during RE I would occasionally while away a tedious lesson doodling or maybe even composing my own comics. They were crap, of course, so I threw them away. Scott Russo, however, had a better idea. He collected all his meanderings up, called it "Jizz" and got Fantagraphics to publish them, and while his audacity is a tribute to a free market economy he doubtless reviles, I feel it my duty to warn anyone expecting anything other than puerile scrawl dressed up as social comment here to avoid Jizz scrupulously. The best joke is to be found on the cover: "Adults only". (JM) 3

KID ANARCHY 1 (Fantagraphics; Cole & McCarthy) The problem with these heavily autobiographical comics is that while the author and his mother might find the small mundane details of his life irresistably fascinating, others might not be as entranced. (Not everyone at Fantagraphics can make a bunch of punk kids hanging out on a street corner interesting). Cole creates a likeable enough cast, but doesn't do much with them, possibly because he's merely transferred them from real life directly onto the printed page without any fictional embellishment. Similarly, while McCarthy is technically proficient, his pencils are a bit lifeless. (SM) 6

LOVE & ROCKETS 34 <-> (Fantagraphics; Hernandez Bros There is simply no excuse for the erratic appearance of this magazine. Fantagraphics claims that Los Bros are artists and can't be rushed or pressured, but Shakespeare wrote The Merchant of Venice, King John, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Richard II, and perhaps As you Like It, as well, in roughly the same time period that Los Bros have managed three issues of Love & Rockets. Who's kidding who, here? Gilbert's complex new story suffers in particular in terms of continuity, which is all but non-existent given the long gaps between issues. Jamie's story fares better, being easier to pick up, perhaps we've all known the likes of Hopey and Doyle for a lot longer than we've known Luba's old crowd. Both are fine stories, though I find myself caring less and less the longer I'm forced to wait. Charles Dickens produced some of his finest work under the pressure of deadlines, so why can't these guys get their comic book out more often? (SM) 8

MAN IN BLACK 1 (Recollections) The Mr Clean image of Harvey Comics - certainly during the '50s - kept the company pretty much free of criticism and controversy - to such an extent that much of their product could be considered bland. The Man in Black (called Fate) certainly perpetuated that myth - not so much tales of horror, more tongue-in-cheek sideswipes at the horror genre as the reprints herein (Bob Powell) attest. (PCP) 5

MAZE AGENCY 19 (Innovation; Barr & Davis + Tighe) Fair whodunit involving the Mystery League Club and two murders executed a year apart. Marred somewhat by one of the suspects suffering a name-change mid-way through. (PCP)4

MORBUS GRAVIS 1 (Catalan; Serpieri) This large format graphic novel is a typical outgrowth of the end-of-century angst that afflicted creators in the 1890s (H G Wells, for example) as much as it does contemporary writers and artists today. The first thing that has to be said beyond that, however, is there is plenty of nudity in **Morbus Gravis** - more specifically, the thighs and breasts of the heroine, and genitals of just about everything else. But it never gets explicit, exploitative, or obscene, so unless you're pubescent you're unlikely to get uncomfortable about it.

The story, and the quality of the artwork, however, is something to get excited about, especially the wonderfully tinted painting married to the mood of whole pages or sequences of panels.

The story, while not dealing with any "new" ideas (sorry, purists) instead explores the collective paranoias we're all familiar with - the doomed urban environment, corruption, plague - with a clout that makes **Give Me Liberty** and **Hard Boiled** look like the antiseptic fantasies they really are...(SB) 8

THE MUMMY 1 (Monster Comics; Scott Beaderstadt) Snazzy production from the Fantagraphics stable is marred by too simplistic story. (SM) 5

NEW FRONTIERS 1 (Evolution; Various) Evolution seems to have a policy of combining awful covers with awful logos. Like the old Marvel anthology books, the logo is split between the features but without any visual presence. Unlike **Dangerous Times**, it matters little because the contents, an impoverished camp hero pastiche, has no presence either. (SR) 2

NIGHTVEIL'S CAULDRON OF HORROR 2 (AC; Heike & Marimon) Nightveil's feline pet Lucifer Sam provides the cat-alyst for trotting out some fairly good horror reprints (as illoed by John Bell, Bob Powell and Joe Kubert). (PCP) 4

PREDATOR 2 (of 2) <-> (Dark Horse; Henkel & Barry + Emberlin) Same plot as last year's mini-series with drug lords, M I 8s, uncompromising cops and unrelenting heat set in the urban jungles of L A and drawn in a surprisingly lacklustre way by comics legend Dan Barry. If the movie's this dull, it's no wonder it's doing so poorly. (WW) 4

PUPPY ACTION 1 (Northstar; M Pearlstein) Cute business puppies, and while it's better than this creator's atrocious and moronic **Amy Papuda**, it's still nonsensical and terribly unfunny. For the bottom of the birdcage only. (SM) 2

ROACHMILL 10 <-> (Dark Horse; Hedden & McWeeney) This stylish SF/noir chuckle-thriller finally bites it once again with a last issue that ties up no plot threads, but just stops where it damn well pleases. Worst issue yet but still a shame to see it go. (WW) 6

ROCK FANTASY 11: JIMI HENDRIX (Revolutionary; James Harmon) Aptly named comic, provides entertaining hokum wherein Hendrix's death is faked in order that he can travel to another planet where he joins a revolution and aids the humanoid inhabitants in their transformation into aqueous creatures (honest!). Weird but nonetheless likeable, and nicely drawn. (SM) 8

ROCK 'N' ROLL COMICS 16: Van Halen <-> (Revolutionary; Todd Loren, Greg Fox and Various) 'Straight' band is okay, as these things go, tho' the back-up parody's not up to its usual standard. (SM) 6

ROY ROGERS WESTERN CLASSICS 3 (AC; Buscema & Manning) A combination of comics, photos and articles which make for an impressive and expensive (@ $3.95) package. A certain collector's item. (PCP) 7

SAMUREE 8 <+ -> (Continuity; Stone & Hoover + Akin + Garvey) As with the other Continuity titles, I suspect the hand of Neal Adams has added various embellishments to the art, though the capable inks of Garvey more than carry the book. The story is quite good, with Samuree using large amounts of violence to take out the drug dealers. It's a pity that Continuity has problems with distribution and deadlines, as otherwise their titles could give some much-needed competition to the majors. (LC) 7

SNARF 15 <+ -> (Kitchen Sink; Various) Fine collection of off-the-wall alternative strips, with enough different contributors to ensure that there's something for everyone who likes this sort of thing. Frenchman Edica's Chomdu strip gets top marks, though Jablonski's Farmer Ned bestial stories gives it a run for the money, and Mark Landman contributes another superb cover (see Buzz #1). Appparently the future of this book is uncertain, which is a shame as there are relatively few outlets for anything truly bizarre and out of the ordinary. (SM) 9

TALES FROM THE OUTER BOROUGHS (Fantagraphics; Michael) At once a strange flight of fancy and a taut, intriguing and well-constructed thriller, featuring Douglas Michael's irregular, though nevertheless accessible pencil style. I know nothing about the man, but this is one of the most entertaining, delightful, original and imaginative comics I've read in years. An amazing debut. Bravo! (SM) 10

TIMEDRIFTER 2 (Innovation; G Jones & Hubenig + Kleinburger) Willis Austerlitz continues his time-travel adventure in '30s Hollywood with everyone wanting to blow his head off. Non-stop action in Jones' inimitable style. (PCP) 7

USAGI YOJIMBO 26 (Fantagraphics; Sakai) Opening with a scene straight from The Seven

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Samurai/The Magnificent Seven, Sakai then takes his rabbit ronin into a replay of the Kirk Douglas/Johnny Cash "A Gunfight" with Usagi's protagonist hoping to win an arranged duel and to retire on the proceeds raised by a gambler accomplice. While the outcome is pretty obvious, Sakai drws sympathy for both central characters while playing on Usagi's distaste for the whole charade. (PCP) 8

VERONICA IN LONDON (Archie; Golliker & Parent) Not as bad as most Yank depictions of Ye Merrie Olde England, though they've painted Harrods pink, they're still going on about "Bobby's" and the Queen looks like she just dropped out of Cinderella. Otherwise it's typical Archie piffle, aimed at those readers too young to follow the complex and sophisticated plotlines of comics like the X-Men. (SM) 7

VINTAGE COMIC CLASSICS 1 (Recollections) Accused of relying too much on his law-books, Judge Straight dons the mantle of The Red Demon in a collection of costume dramas (by Bill Draut) culled from the Harvey Comics archives. Formula stuff. (PCP) 5

WILL EISNER PRESENTS 1 (Eclipse) A plane crash in the Himalayas. Lamas to the rescue. The pilot survivor endowed with mystic powers and a new identity - Mr Mystic. Hardly original save that the stories reprinted here first appeared in the '40s as part of the Spirit Sections. Illustrated by Bob Powell in a more realistic style than his better known '50s renditions it is no more than average fare but more than welcome from an historical point of view. (PCP) 7

WORLD'S WORST COMICS AWARDS (Kitchen Sink; Schumeister & Larson) Hardly what it claims to be, really, as most of the choices are neither justified, fair, nor representative. One senses sour grapes and personal gripes at work here. Why single out Roy Thomas for alleged poor dialogue, for example, when there are scores of otheres who've produced far worse gibberish than the examples reproduced here. just pick up most any Marvel Mutant book, for instance. I would suggest that Messrs Schumeister & Larson sit down and try to write a comic the equal of Thomas's brilliant Conan stories, or his classic FF tales, among others, before venting their ill-informed, biased and idiotic opinions. (SM) 2

FLEETWAY

COMPLETE NEW STATESMAN (Smith & Baikie + Fegredo + Phillips) Beautifully drawn, but few comics are as unappealing as the Crisis super-hero yarn.

So much of it seems to be phrased in a heavy-handed post-Watchmen style radical chic that it becomes an endeavor to follow it. Maybe, some rainy day, I'll be able to make the effort. (SR) 4

CRISIS 54 <++> (Various) The new format seems to be allowing Crisis to view the world in a slightly wider context, though much of it still reads like a Play for Today reject. If it can move beyond being the poor man's Barry Keefe there should be some good stuff in sight. Mark (Saviour) Millar and Paul (St Swithin's Day) Grist show some promise with Insiders, their new prison-based strip. It has all the hallmarks of gripping drama but, like Third World War, it seems overplayed when it should be understated.

The fly in the ointment is a little more apparent in a feature on the Gulf conflict. Much of it is commentary, when the Amnesty strips prove that Crisis is radical when it works in a documentary style.

The skill to explain social problems (national or international) exists within Robert Maxwell's publishing empire. It should be used. (SR) 7

UK INDEPENDENT

ACTION: THE STORY OF A VIOLENT COMIC (Titan; Martin Barker) This examination of the curious precursor to 2000AD provides some useful insights into the kind of corporate squabbles that lie behind any comic.

Barker also documents the campaigns that condemned Action for extreme violence.

It provides food for thought in light of the current transatlantic controversy surrounding various "adult" comics.

Some pressure groups took to defacing Action with stickers bearing pseudo-legal declarations. Publishing group IPC capitulated in the face of such pressure and Action was remoulded along more traditional lines. The changes are illustrated with "before and after" versions of the major strips.

Action itself was crude by any definition. Sociologist Barker states that trying to find virtues in the title is pointless. However it undoubtedly tapped into a popular contemporary mood.

Essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the British comic. (SR) 9

BLACKOUT FANZINE 2 (Various) Rather engaging celebration of comics and rock. This issue probes the minds of Grant Morrison, Denny O'Neil and assorted rockers.

The respective contributors seem to enjoy the work of their subjects and it's nice to see that they don't resort to the bitching that permiates similar publications. (SR) 8

DEADLINE CHRISTMAS EDITION <++> Usual mixture of sheeeeer brilliance and the mind-bogglingly dull. (PH) 7

DOCTOR WHO 167 <+ -> (Marvel) Abnett & Sullivan + Farmer) Confident strip, even if it is only three pages long. With much of the feature material, such as 'Those Radio Times' seeming to tread on old ground it is a shame that Marvel seems unable to afford to up the strip content of this title. (SR) 7

DREAMSTONE 1 (London Editions; Clarke + Radley & Filmfair + Flemming + Sharp) Fine adaptation of a seemingly imaginative tv show that allows this publisher to stretch beyond the sacharin sweetness of My Little Pony or the forced innocence of Rainbow.

At 85p it is quite a bargain too, when you consider that Penguin's sister company Ladybird would cut out the words, more than halve the page count, and charge about £4 for it. (SR) 7

JAKE BRAMAH 1 (GLT Graphic Design; G L Thomas) Glaswegian hardman beats the drug-runners. Full of promise, but it never really delivers. Vague narrative and grammatical errors that can't be excused as characterisation take the shine off an interesting prospect. Given an editor to patch up the cracks, this could be a real contender. (SR) 4

LOVE (Small Press; Poulacheris & Williams + Dray) Impressive first outing from these three students of the London Cartoon Centre. Four stories ranging from the poetic to the whimsical. Often obscure and challenging in both visuals and story but worth the effort. (WW) 8

FREAK BROTHERS 11 <+ -> (Knockabout; Shelton & Mavrides) The Fabulous Furry Ones haven't changed noticeably since their first comic back in 1968, which is both this book's strength and weakness. On the one hand, long-time readers might appreciate a bit of variety and depth, perhaps even a surprise or two in this first new collection for almost four years. On the other hand, the brothers are as funny and zany as ever. 'Save the Giant Hamsters' and 'Fat Freddy, Drug Czar' rank with their finest (mis)adventures, while the short 'Freak Brothers Grow Old' is a gem. Let's just hope it won't be another four years until the next issue - even Love and Rockets comes out more frequently! (SM) 9

LUCIFER 3 (of 3) <+ -> (Trident; Campbell & Grist) Bit of a damp squib in some ways, but this game-show version of the Apocalypse is still a good laugh. (SR) 7

MAURETANIA (Penguin; Reynolds) Like most Penguin comics this romance uses simplistic artwork to explore a complex world.

After being made redundant, a young woman is employed by another company where the motivation behind the job offer opens a can of worms and makes compelling reading.

Rather like The Prisoner, Chris Reynold's novel can be interpreted as a conspiracy or an allegory, and its strengths lie in twisting familiar concerns into something sinister. (SR) 10

PARAFFIN THE FOURTH PARABLE ALIEN BLUES (Alien Mosquito; Chimalio) Strangely satisfying and admirably defiant of comic mores with a touch of the Ubu Rois.

Chimalio raids African art traditions to illustrate a wonderfully oblique and wickedly funny view of the world. This issue's tale of failed expectations and punctured pride mines a bleak vein of humour.

Quite why Penguin haven't added it to their graphic novel list is a mystery.(SR) 10

PARAFFIN THE FIFTH PARABLE: NEW SOCIETY <+ -> (Alien Mosquito; E. Chimalio) This issue weaves a morbidly funny web of death and deception. Paraffin is unlike any other copmic around, and needs to be experienced. (SR) 8

SHADOWMEN 2 <+ -> (Trident; Millar & Hope + Dilworth) Mark (Saviour) Millar's vision is deep and hard to penetrate. Rough lettering makes it difficult to decipher. (SR) 2

SIDESHOW 8 (Pan Graphics; Spenser & various) Having ignored this title for so long it's a pleasant surprise to find out that to do so was a mistake. Sideshow's mix of spoofery and true-to-life irony make it an eclectic but entertaining anthology.

The contents are diverse, but somehow sit easily together, avoiding the discord of Revolver. (SR) 8

SUPERMAN WITH JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL 40 (London Editions; various) The revamp of Superman by John Byrne was exciting in the extreme when DC got through their infinite Crisis. It created a real buzz around the character. However, a mere five years later, his Man of Steel seems rather hackneyed, if not altogether dire. (SR) 3

TAPPING THE VEIN 4 (of 4)<+ -> (Titan; Clive Barker & various) This finale is actually the least impressive of the horror anthology, but it's still a class act.

Barker's skill is in undermining the mundane with the outlandish, something lost in the abattoir-fixation of Marvel's Hellraiser series.

An ongoing supply of Tapping the Vein would not be remiss. (SR) 8

TOXIC PRESENTS MARSHAL LAW (Apocalypse; Mills & O'Neill) It's sad how quickly a good idea can go stale. This time our hero is after the caped crusader and, as you'd expect, there's lots of big boy, little boy innuendo. But O'Neill's art is superb and benefits greatly from the increased size of the UK edition, at £1.50. (WW) 6

SPHINX PAPER MAGAZINE 2 <++> (Bold; Various) "The first black music, culture and comic magazine" shows a verve and gloss sadly lacking in its rivals. Strong features, great strips by Floyd Hughes, Kirk Ettienne, Akin Akinsiku and Wayne Massop. I'm not young, gifted or black but this was still the best thing I read this week. (WW) 10

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Prices, projects and people in the news, as covered by ITMA.

SPIDER-MAN Platinum edition: I'm predicting here and now that "black market" copies of this trade only giveaway with its ten pages of new McFarlane artwork will be selling for over £100 a copy as soon as they reach the shops. A genuine collector's item!

The "Blue Lizard" misprint edition remains in the news, as **UK Comics Price Guide** editor Duncan McAlpine will not be acknowledging its value in his soon-to-be-released 1991 edition. Copies were changing hands at the recent Birmingham Comic Mart for £15 each, fuelling the growing anxiety that the misprint is nothing special.

SURE INVESTMENT

ALTHOUGH the new **X-Men** title planned for this Summer is to be a $1.00 newsprint title, it will be another guaranteed good investment to bulk up on. Expect the **Spider-Man** 1 kind of confusion and disappointment from comic shop owners again this year, unless dealers order correctly. And, given the slow trade caused by the snow, the war and the recession, few of them will risk speculating.

This is one item I would strongly advise shops to over-order. It may be worthwhile placing orders with US-based companies to hedge against the possibility of undersupply.

Comic shops: if you over-order from your supplier, as high as four times your normal order, you'll still be playing safe. If the title is under-shipped, you'll get a percentage of your over-order, if not a new **X-Men** comic will still sell well, at at $1.00, it's hardly a high cost product that cannot fail to increase in value.

MUTANT MANIA

EXPECT **New Mutants** 86-100 (excluding the two fill-in issues) to sell well and begin to gain pace in value. Although nothing special, expect a rise in demand for **X-Factor** 50-54 and 56-62. And watch out for the Whilce Portacio issues of **X-Factor** and **X-Men**, the hottest of the lot.

WOLVERINE

Back issues of the popular X-Man's own title continue to disappear from the back issue boxes as soon as they are restocked. Issue 10 is the hottest, fetching as much as £6. His "Weapon X" origin serial in **Marvel Comics Presents** will be scalding, try to find back issues in six months.

GHOST RIDER

THE NEW hot Marvel title, with its star having more than his fair share of hyping through guest shots elsewhere, and guest stars in his own monthly, isn't really anything out of the ordinary.

The title's inflated prices have been as a direct result of American hype and alarmist tactics by dealers in this country.

I know of at least one dealer who has stockpiled over 1000 copies of issue one, and moves ten at each mart, priced £4+.

In comic shops, fans have seen prices as high as £11, a direct reflection of US values.

But Ghost Rider is not in the same league as The Punisher once was for sparking high prices in guest shots. Speculators are snapping up copies, but I think that there is little financial gain to be made out of investing here.

The only title that has become genuinely hot as a result of the new **Ghost Rider** comic is **Marvel Spotlight** 5, featuring the origin and first appearance of the last incarnation of the character. At present, this 1972 Mike Ploog title is in the 'name your price' catagory.

Realistically, any character that Marvel resurrects is going to cause some kind of stir in an increasingly investment/hype led market, so a first issue is guaranteed to increase in value. Just look at Captain America in **The Avengers** or Animal Man in **Strange Adventures.** Regardless of direct links to series, first appearances of those that make it are always worth more.

So you can expect to see upward movement on DC's original **Demon** 1 (by Kirby) and **Shade** 1 (by Ditko). Already **Thor** 411 and 412, with the first appearances of The New Warriors, are moving up in the "must have" or "key books" charts.

Challengers of the Unknown looks like a hot mini-series, based on initial reaction, which should give the original series a boost, and **Thor**'s upcoming "Death of Loki" plotline should boost back issue sales as only death stories can.

DARKHAWK

MARVEL's first "Wild Ones" launch of the year, **Darkhawk**, has come in with a bang. Sales on the first issue have been good, but I expect the same response throughout the year as **RoboCop** had last year: a good start, then a terrific slide.

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line-up looks to be a pretty mixed bag; two new heroes, two resurrections; a film tie-in and two revamps of old ideas. I expect **Sleepwalker** will be hot, but **Deathlok** and **Wonder Man** should be much hotter. Look out for Jeff Johnson's spectacular pencil art on the latter. **X-Force** and **X-Men** will obviously be hot, and even **Toxic Avenger** is a smash in the States, so it might be worth investing in copies for future sell back to US dealers, but Marvel has a notoriously bad track record with film tie-ins.

EMERALD YAWN

EMERALD DAWN, the Green Lantern 'Year One' mini-series has warrented a 'Year Two' sequel. But while the original mini was super hot in the States, it proved only mildly lukewarm over here.

Capitalising on the varying value, a canny Northern dealer traded ten copies of issue one (cost around £3.90 current UK wholesale) for an American dealer's **X-Men** 94 (worth £84.50 current UK average retail).

OVER THERE ...

REPORTS from the USA reveal a massive slump in the market, with most convention dealers offering huge discounts.

Several sources confirm that the January New York convention would have been a total washout had it not been for the UK dealers present, the only people who were buying.

Two of the UK bargain hunters were buying for resale at a massive 80% discount.

Expect to see a massive drop in selling prices as Britain is now awash with US imported bargain silver age comics. Prices are already varying remarkably, with **X-Men** 1 having sold twice for as little as £200 a copy in at least fine condition, while a VG+ copy was seen to sell at £195 locally, and at a recent mart for £350 in VFN. Unsold copies are gathering dust at prices in excess of £850.

SCARCITY

SILVER SURFER 4 (1st series) is regarded in the States as a "difficult book", or scarce in our language. But it seems to have reappeared over here in abundance. Six copies can be found within a 60 mile radius of Birmingham, and, at a recent London mart, one dealer had four on the wall behind him. The title usually sells for around £50 in VFN. Collectors buying for investment shouldn't expect too much from 1991, with a combination of US imported cheap back issues and our own recession hitting hard.

DC WINNERS

ONE WIT recently called DC a "big independent publisher". Outside of its big-gun super heroes, the tag seems apt as the company continues to move further away from mainstream newsstand titles. It also is the largest employer of British talent, a not-neccesarily non-related point. Its **Sandman, Hellblazer, Demon, Shade, Animal Man, Doom Patrol, Books of Magic** and **World Without End** are reported to rely heavily on their UK sales to save them from cancellation.

Unlike the US, British dealers command high prices for key issues of DC's Brit (or part-Brit) creations, with Morrison, Gaiman and the Maggie Thatcher **Hellblazer** being prime examples.

Key DCs have been booming recently. Look for interest in Deadman, Spectre, Phantom Stranger and issues of **Secret Origins** with magic themes as fast movers. **Spectre** 9 has been selling at £3.50, while Mike Mignola's **Phantom Stranger** mini-series is still a bargain at £2.50 for the set of four.

On the silver age front, watch out for increased popularity with the **Strange Adventures** Deadman issues and early **Challengers of the Unknown** (especially the Kirby issues). **Lois Lane** camp issues are hotting up too, in the wake of the recent engagement, and the revival of the Newsboy Legion should enhance the value of the relevant issues of **Jimmy Olsen.**

DAVID'S HULK

THE HOTTEST current title seems to be **The Incredible Hulk.** As reported last issue, sales are stupendous on new issues, even if back issues are pretty slow moving. Most of the Dale Keown issues still retail at only 60p each, although issue 367 (Keown's first issue) is up to £1.50.

The McFarlane drawn issues seem to be history as Peter David's memorable Countdown four-parter is being taken by many as a perfect kick off point for new readers. Expect dealers and shop owners to start pushing up prices on this serial over the next few months, and pick up any copies (1st or 2nd edition) of issue 377 that you can find.

RECESSION? WHAT RECESSION?

IN A PERIOD of doom and gloom, I heard a Midlands shop owner recently comment that "people don't spend more than a couple of quid on comics now".

Maybe he should move, as I witnessed a man in his mid-twenties spend £145 on X-Men back issues then return four days later to spend another £75 and leave a wants list.

London-based Adventure into Comics sold £7,000 worth of comics, after discount, to one customer and Stateside topped that with a sale of £11,000 against a credit card.

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As always, we intend the ***Comics International*** *letters column to act as a forum for readers views on topics and arguments raised in previous issues and elsewhere relating to the comics industry. We provide the platform and the audience, the rest is up to you!*

...Dez Skinn/Editor

Steven Whitcher, 233 Mudford Rd Yeovil, Somerset

I first came across your long-overdue fabzoid magazine at **Nu Earth Comics** in York, and I was mega-amazed by it, hence the subscription.

But, to get to the point, of my letter: Having lived through the embarrassment of being a **TMNTurtles** collector during the recent **TMHT** promotions, I am reminded of something written by creators Eastman and Laird when they were collered by some of the **TMNT** (Mirage) readers who complained about the cartoon series and associated merchandise. They said (roughly) that as mature people we must separate the things we enjoy from those we don't.

American serious collectors of Mirage's **TMNTurtles** now have to suffer the side effects of the **Turtle** movies and tv shows. Not only will we have to pay more for our back issues (which I suppose has the plus side of increasing the value of those we've already got), but we are associated with the mass marketing by CPL.

But then, I suppose that having the Turtles brought to a wide audience is a good thing for the creators, even though the storylines are so weak.

Steve Wild, 1 Chaster St., Batley, West Yorkshire

One thing I really enjoy about your magazine is to see so many professional cartoonists, artists and writers writing in to say how much they enjoy the magazine. They admirably put into words what all of us feel.

I also like the way you are cynical about obvious rip-offs and don't mind saying so, the McFarlane **Spider-Man** affair springs to mind.

Do US dealers really get a 60% discount on cover price? I guess they must do or they wouldn't be able to advertise new comics at 30% off. A pie-chart showing exactly how much of our hard-earned pennies go where (publishers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers) would be really interesting.

I must also compliment you on the sales charts, based on cost and percentage of market, and the in-depth coverage of issues which others treat in a gossip column way.

Now, will you resurrect **Warrior**? Pretty please?

Remember when ***Deadman*** *was revived by Kirby? Or* ***Eagle*** *by IPC? How about Judy Garland's comeback at the London Palladium (where she forgot the words to "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" on national tv)? The Hollies tried a comeback, as did Muhammed Ali? Film remakes and sequels invariably detract from the originals. The list is endless.*

It's almost impossible for anyone or anything to be revived and be able to compete with a memory. New ideas can stand alone, without comparison to to fondly remembered days of our youth. Attempts invariably fail and irreparably damage the memories of the original.

Each has its time and place. ***Warrior****'s time was almost ten years ago when no one was offering creator control and only buying first rights. We were all more niave and keen.*

Surely we don't need another ***Warrior*** *now?*

Andrew Harvey, Leytonstone London E11

The February **Comics International** had an interesting letter from Phil Hall about the economics of retailing, especially with regard to buying collections from fans.

This is something that increasingly worries me as the media becomes more and more infatuated with comics' respectability through their investment value.

I think it's all a sham. Both US and UK Price Guides tell us back issues of **The Invaders** are worth money (£2 to 60p US; £4 to 60p UK), A full set is "worth " £33.80 according to the UK Guide, and £27.50 by US standards.

"Oh, grow up!" as Joan Rivers is prone to say. Are we meant to believe that anyone would give over 5p a copy for most of this 41 issue + 2 specials collection.

Most of the rushed factory-line mass-produced comics ever published are disposable pap. No one seriously believes they are collectable back issues with any value whatsoever.

They're second hand comics, and should reflect it instead of being given spurious values.

Sure, there are gems, about 10% of each month's output increases in value, not 100%.

So let's say you were a Batman collector, somewhat more astute than an **Invaders** collector.

The Bat-books have had their share of hot issues over the last few years. But those in-between Miller, Starlin & Byrne?

They're still easily available at cover price from any mart or wholesale/discount dealer.

Buying for investment has to be the dodgiest hype ever pushed on to a gullible media.

Outside of buying at cover price when a title comes out, buying back issues and expecting to make a profit is second only to playing roulette.

Daredevil 158, the first Frank Miller issue, was going for £12 to £15 by the time anyone realised it was 'hot'. That was around 1980. Yet the UK Guide for 1990, a full ten years later still puts an NM copy at £14.

To simply cover your costs when selling it, at a mere 10% per annum compound interest on £15, you'd be looking at someone paying over £30 for it. A dealer, at best, would give you 50% of his selling price, so it would need a 1990 value of over £60. Just to earn you 10% a year. No way.

As for these people who are supposed to have paid prices like £10,000 for a **Batman** 1, how much will it have to increase in value for a dealer's buying price to exceed £10,000. 100%? Can we talk?

Snippets from recent comments received . . .

Joe W. Matthews, Rochdale "I'd be interested to know if Humour Publications, who placed an advert with you some time ago, ever got their comic going?" *Yes, their giant-size* ***Zit*** *first issue went on sale at Christmas. But they changed address, to 1st Floor Suite, Sovereign House, 43 Church Street, Brighton.*

Luca Biaini, S. Lucia, Italy: "Many thanks for producing a very interesting magazine."

Fellow Italian ***Marco M. Lupoi****, editorial director of Edizioni Star Comics and* ***Antonio Martin****, editorial director of Marvel, Eclipse and First reprints in Spain also wrote thanking us for our extensive coverage of the often-confusing comics medium.*

Colin Gould, Ogre Books, Liverpool: "**Comics International** is going nicely at 30p ... not one complaint! Everybody seems to appreciate the effort you put into it and seem quite happy to make a small contribution towards the running costs."

While almost every letter has complimented us on our 30p cover price being good value, and retail orders are rapidly increasing (with London's ***Gosh*** *having doubled up to 200 and* ***Comic Showcase*** *selling out in under two weeks),* ***Terry Gay*** *of* ***Negative Zone****, Newport wrote:*

"It is with regret that I have to reduce my regular monthly order to 100. It seems a shame that the public are so small minded they object to paying 30p for the best written and informative magazine of its kind, at a price that makes others seem exhorbitant.

"I notice that the circulation has dropped by 500 since the December issue. Do you think the reason for this could be due to the fact that you are now charging for **Comics International**? If so, it seems a shame that you have become victims of your own success."

Yes, we did suffer a 5% drop but only today we had three shops increase their orders and two new shops start taking copies, so our sales are already back up to 11,000 and definitely on the rise.

Richard Thomas, Adlington writes: "I am subscribing to **Comics International** as it is the only comics news magazine which has come anywhere near to the old style that **Fantasy Advertiser** and **Comic Media News** used to have all those years ago. I like the basic 'cut the crap' look and the overall feel of the magazine."

Jim Galton of Marvel Comics *asked when we'd be putting the magazine on better quality paper. For those of you getting dirty fingers, I'm afraid the answer is when we can do so and still keep the price under 50p. The commencement of ads from America is a step in that direction.*

Eve Stickler of the **London Cartoon Centre:** "I really do think that it is a well rounded and informative publication which has been invaluable in keeping me 'in the know' in this very peculiar business, and I know that my students and tutors enjoy it too."

Mike Amos, Cockermouth: "Brilliant, well worth double the price you charge. The reviews are good, the articles good, it's just brilliant. I can't praise it highly enough. Subscription fee enclosed."

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Private collection for sale: many Marvel & DC comics including some independents. Lots of major titles priced to sell! Send SAE for lists to Alex Ilic, 1 Lely Close, Manton Heights, Bedford, MK41 7LS.

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All the following items are in VF to Mint condition, sold as sets only. **Emerald Dawn** 1-6 £15; **Punisher** 1-5 £75; **Iceman** 1-4 £10; **Human Torch** 1-4 £10; **Night Crawler** 1-4 £10; **Crisis** 1-12 £35; **Detective** 575-8 £35; **Batman** 417-420 £35; **Batman** 426-429 £40; **Catwoman** 1-4 £25; **Batman Yr 1** (Miller, hbk) £50; **Kitty Pryde** 1-6 £25; **Longshot** 1-6 £75; **Secret Wars** 1-12 £25; **Secret Wars II** 1-9 £20. Other sets, please enquire. Following are available from issue 1: **Dr Strange, Web, Peter Parker, Spider-Man, Punisher & War Journal, New Mutants, Flash, Surfer, JLA, Daredevil, FF, Avengers, X-Men,** etc. Plus **X-Factor, W/C Avengers** available, **Avengers** 9, **X-Men** 8 **Daredevil** 4, **Spidey** 18 19 121 122 129, **FF** 7 32 33, **Dr Strange** 181 183, **Cap** 113. Also golden and silver age DCs and Fawcetts. All prices are inclusive of p&p. Please enquire for following with extra large SAE for samples and prices: Comic backing board 7x10½". We also specialise in comic bags in small or large quantities, up to 40% discount available (dealers please enquire for wholesale rates). Comics also wanted, top prices paid. Peter Lennon, 15 Yewtree Close, Batchley, Redditch B97 6ND, Worcs. Or telephone our hotline 0527 585036. **(T)**

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Wonder Woman 14 (vg) and **Robin** 1 wanted. J Wallace, Bradgate, Demesne Road, Dundalk, Co Louth, Eire.

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I want your wants lists on **Batman, Detective** and **Swamp Thing** (SAE please): M. J. Shipley, PO Box 120, Wolverhampton, WV1 1UG. **(T)**

Just the other day I was thinking how wonderful life can be when I remembered that I still needed **Justice League** 74 & 136, **Superman Family** 221 and **Teen Titans** (Baxter) 46 & 50. Can one of you nice people help me find a will to live again? Dave on 081 558 6657 (after 4.30pm).

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WILHELM UTHE of Oldendorf, Germany: If any collector has had problems with this dealer, would they please contact Ian Penman, 18 Merrington Close, Moorside, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 2QE. Tel: 091 528 5135.

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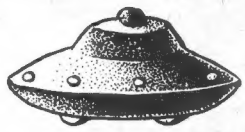

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